MORE of Our Canada
READER'S DIGEST
OUR COUNTRY, OUR STORIES

Snow Birds!

Enjoying Winter Beauties in Your Own Backyard

Our Travels: Heading Home to Nova Scotia

Collectors: Angels Among Us

Savoury Stews to Warm You Up!

JANUARY 2023
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ROTARY INTERNATIONAL
839

Julie Gourdeau of Campbell River, B.C., snapped this amazing image; to learn more about it and see more gorgeous winter pics, turn to page 44.

MORE of Our Canada

JANUARY 2023

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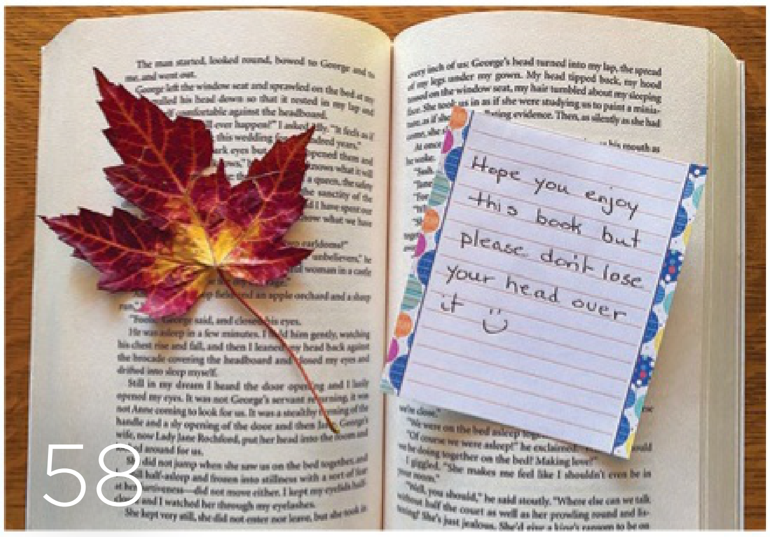
Hope you enjoy this book but please don't lose your head over it ☺
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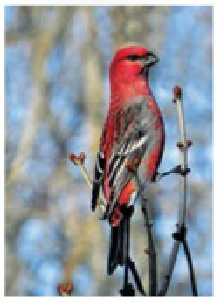

ABOUT THE COVER

Daryle Friesen of St. Laurent, Man., snapped this stunning pic of a male pine grosbeak in her front yard. Turn to page 8 to see more great bird pics and to read Daryle's photo essay, "Bird's-Eye View."

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Joan's great-great-grandparents, Job and Ellen.

Feeling Grateful

Before moving from Waterloo, Ont., to Saskatoon, I was a regular at The Healthy Owl—a café run by a dear friend, Lora-Lee, and her husband, Dennis. The Healthy Owl became more than a cup of coffee and flavourful food; it was like home!

It was also a place I wrote, and sometimes Lora-Lee would take a minute to listen to something I'd written. The people there were my cheerleaders long before I was published. In fact, a young high school student on staff gave me an awesome critique on a children's story that *Our Canada* published, called "What Do You Want To Be?"

Lora-Lee and I have stayed in touch since I moved. She sent me an email about my Coming to Canada story, "Crossing the Atlantic," which appeared in the recent October-November 2022 issue, that read in part: "What a story! And what a history! You wrote and described everything so well, it is impossible not to feel connected to this time and those people." I, too, am proud of the work I did to get my great-great-grandparents' story ready for *Our Canada*. As usual, you gave it a polished look in both text and photos!

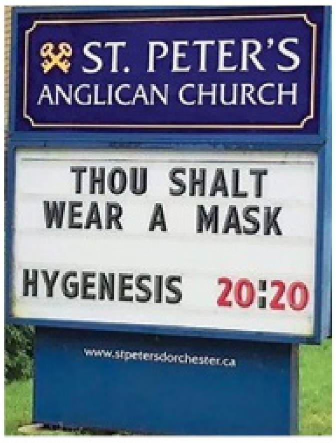
Filled to the top with gratitude,

Joan Almond,
Saskatoon, Sask.

Total Enjoyment

The September 2022 issue of *More of Our Canada* tickled my fancy. Among the many standouts were Helen Stadnyk's Cause for Applause story and Judy Boyer's poem, "I Miss Me." I also relived Louise McGorman's "Basic Computer Woes" and eventually learned to enjoy using the computer. In the Birds & Blooms section, the photo of Sally Beard's mailbox with blooming morning glories gives me hope because I planted a morning glory in my balcony planter for the first time this year. It is trying to strangle the geraniums but hasn't produced flowers yet. The various photos from Reykjavik, Peggy's Cove and Newfoundland brought back memories of my past travels. To top it off, the St. Peter's Anglican Church sign on the Funny Stuff page was submitted by a friend from our teenage years. I haven't been able to spot the loonie this time, but I'm looking forward to future issues!

Ruth Trottier, *North Bay, Ont.*



Submitted by Barbara Dow of London, Ont.

CONTRIBUTOR SPOTLIGHT

DARYLE FRIESEN

Born and raised in a small village on the shores of Lake Manitoba, Daryle is the fourth child in a family of seven siblings. After finishing high school, she briefly lived in Winnipeg but could not get used to the fast-paced city life. Shortly after getting married, Daryle moved back to the country, about ten kilometres from where she grew up. She has always loved the outdoors and appreciates all of nature—turn to page 8 to read her photo essay **Bird's-Eye View.** Daryle adores nature, and as long as her health holds up, she will continue to explore and photograph what she finds intriguing. She always has her camera handy, as you never know what you may see, even on a short trip to town!

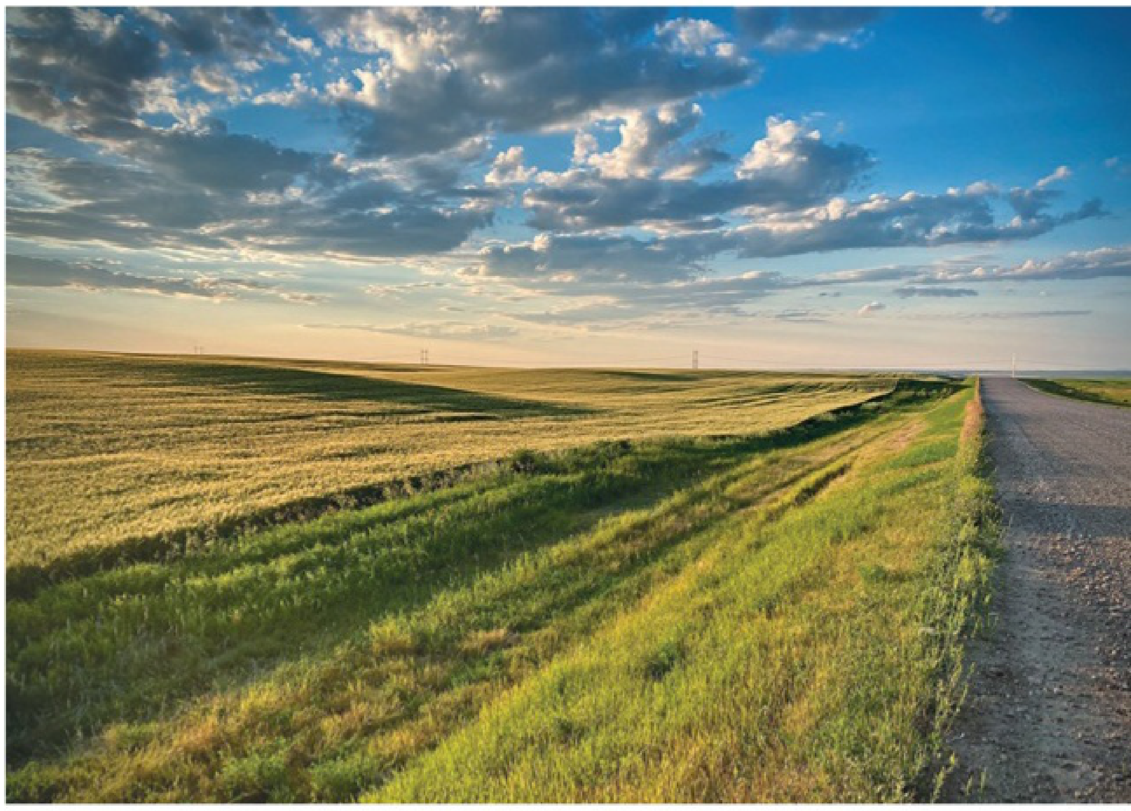
SANDY MOORE

Sandy was born and grew up in Southwestern Ontario. In 1979, she and her husband, Wes, moved to the northwestern region of the province, where Wes worked for the Ontario Provincial Police. They raised two daughters and Sandy later worked 12 years for a nonprofit organization. The couple have lived in Sault Ste. Marie since 2002 and are now both retired. They enjoy travelling and have been to Vietnam, Cambodia, and parts of Europe and Africa. Sandy's love of photography and animals has come together creatively in a series of children's books, inspired by the adventures of their newest furry family member, Chloe. Read all about it in **Showcase** on page 41.

Passing It Along

I enjoy the variety of stories in *Our Canada* and *More Our Canada* magazines. Being in my mid-80s I've lived through two wars: WWII and the Korean War, so I enjoy many stories of our veterans. My father emigrated from Holland in 1925, so I'm quite interested in other stories of immigrants from that era as well. The reason I'm writing to you now is to say how much I enjoyed the poem "I Miss Me" written by Judy Boyer of Dawson Creek, B.C. My wife and I identified with every word written. We've shown it to all who have visited us, including our children and grandchildren. All the best in your writing career, Judy, you certainly have found your niche. Also, all my subscriptions are taken to a seniors' home in Orillia, Ont., for the seniors to enjoy reading.

Greg van Andel, *Coldwater, Ont.*



THEME PIC

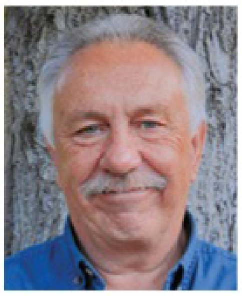
FACEBOOK CHALLENGE / **PRAIRIES**

John Unruh of Parksville, B.C., submitted this gorgeous shot to our "Prairies" Theme Pics Challenge, writing: "Wide open spaces and clouds in the prairie sky near Swift Current, Sask. It's no wonder that Saskatchewan's motto is 'Land of Living Skies.'" **To find out what the current theme is, head to rd.ca/challenge and submit your photos!**

Editor's Note: *In November's Contributor Spotlight, Dianne Harke's family name was spelled as Hark; our apologies, Dianne! Also, in Collectors by Phyllis Gravelle, we indicated the wrong museum in which her doll collection is to be housed: Arborg & District Multicultural Heritage Village (www.arborgheritagevillage.ca) is the correct locale. Our apologies to Phyllis and anyone who was inconvenienced by our mistake.*

RUTH WRIGHT

Ruth was born in Oshawa, Ont., and remained there until she and her husband retired. They then moved to beautiful Fenelon Falls, Ont., where they lived for 35 years. During their retirement years, they took many trips throughout Canada and the USA, camping with a trailer and later with a mini-motorhome. They had previously enjoyed camping with up to three or four of their children. To be closer to family, the couple moved back to Oshawa about three years ago. Now Ruth enjoys travel through the lens of *Our Canada*. Read about her cherished collection of Christmas angels—each one evoking warm family memories—in this issue's **Collectors** feature on page 52.



KEITH SHELEFONTIUK

Keith is a retired equipment operator currently living in Pass Creek, a rural area outside of Castlegar, B.C. He studied at the Kootenay School of the Arts in 1977 where he earned a certificate in fine arts. Keith is a self-taught watercolour artist who has conducted night classes and weekend workshops in painting, drawing and calligraphy for the Selkirk College continuing-education program. In summer, he goes mountain biking to stay in shape for his favourite time of year, winter, when he enjoys skiing and indulging in his snow-sculpting pastime. To learn more and see some of Keith's work, turn to **Crafty Canadians** on page 54.

EDITOR'S LETTER

NEW YEAR, MORE STORIES!

As 2022 gives way to 2023, I find the act of screening newly arrived stories to be very reassuring, and quite humbling. Reassuring because we've been publishing your stories in *Our Canada* since 2004 and in *More of Our Canada* since 2008—and here we are nearly 20 years later, with a total of 11,651 published items on file, and your new submissions just keep on coming in! Humbling, not only because of the volume of potential content we receive, but also because of its quality and diversity, which never fails to amaze me. It's easy to see why kicking off the new year with a heartfelt thank you to all of our contributors and readers is an "absolutely must do" for me in this space, and so on behalf of our entire editorial and design team—"Thank You!"

And so we have more great stories to share with you in this issue, including a string of down-home tales that are sure to warm your heart and conjure up a few happy memories. Let's start with "Rock, Rock, Rocking Chair" on page 28, by Melba Jean Verkland of Calgary, who relates the story of her family's century-old, handmade rocker that has served four generations of children...so far. Then, there's "The Fudge Pot" to savour on page 30, where Andrea Adair-Tippins of Whitby, Ont., describes how an old, broken-down kitchen utensil keeps her connection with her dear late mother intact—a stirring story in more ways than one. Anybody who has ever tried to make bread according to their mom's "a little of this and lots of that" method of baking will appreciate "A Lesson in Bread Making" by Gloria Hansen of Thessalon, Ont. Gloria rises to the challenge on page 37.

And in closing, a friendly reminder that our annual Share Your Canada photo contest is now under way, with a total of $1,000 in cash prizes being awarded. See page 18 for all the details.

Happy 2023, everyone!

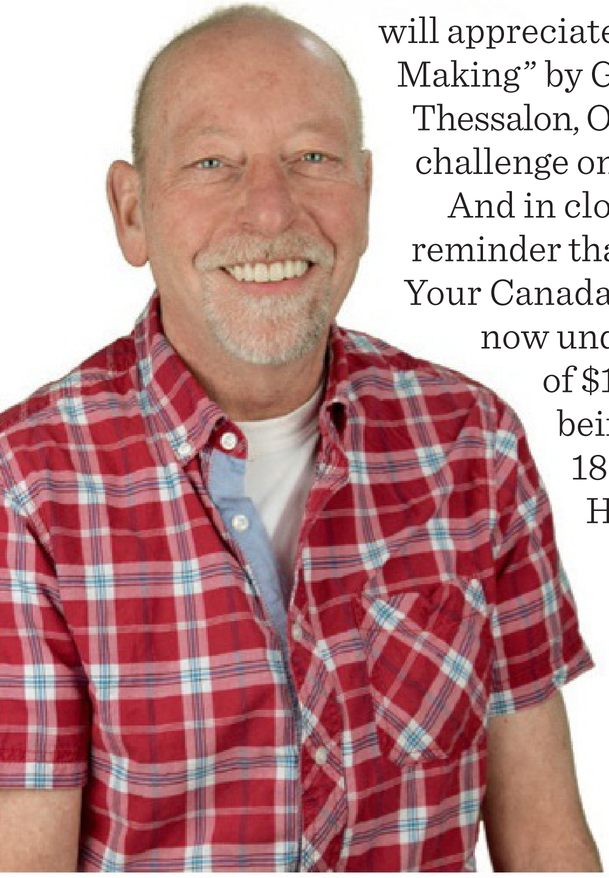


PHOTO: RYAN GEORGE

Gary George
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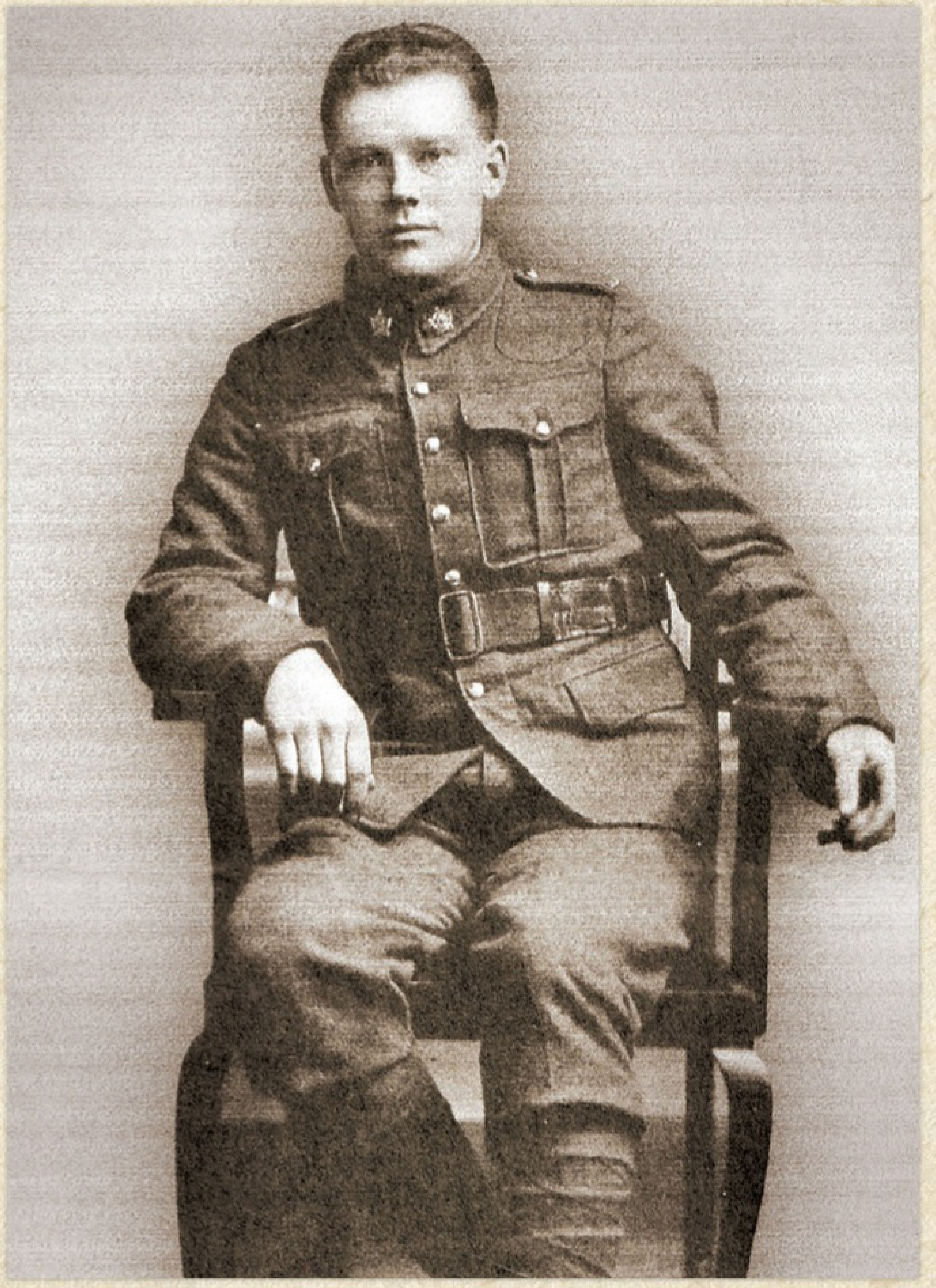


PHOTO: FORPROSTERITYSSAKE.CA

Anthon Falk

WWI INFANTRY PRIVATE

by Lenore Kobylka, Devon, Alta.

Private Anthon Falk of Calmar, Alta., was conscripted into the Canadian Army infantry in May 1918, at 22 years old. He trained in Calgary and Petawawa, Ont., before being sent overseas to Bramshot, England. Just as he and his company were deemed ready for combat, an epidemic of mumps broke out. By the time it ended, the Armistice was signed and the war was over.

> **“Dad would be thrilled that his story is being told decades later.”**

Instead of going home, Anthon transferred to the medical corps, first working in a hospital and then aboard HMHS (Hospital Ship) *Araguaya.* He made two trans-Atlantic crossings to bring home wounded soldiers. After his discharge on August 31, 1919, Anthon finally went home too, where he farmed, married and raised five daughters with his wife, Bertha. He passed away in 1991 at 95 years of age. I am one of his daughters. My twin sister Louise and I know in our hearts that Dad would be thrilled that this story about his proudest moments is still being told today.

Our Canada

Share your veteran profiles at ourcanada.ca

Bird's-Eye View

Daryle Friesen of St. Laurent, Man., captures the bright and beautiful birds that grace her backyard

I was born and raised in the Interlake Region of Manitoba and still live there today. As a young girl, I always loved the beauty of nature, and even now as a senior citizen, I still have that same passion for wildlife.

I first got into photographing birds, particularly winter birds, about 12 years ago. It all started when I happened to look outside my kitchen window one day and saw a beautiful pileated woodpecker. It was the first time I had ever seen one. I excitedly grabbed my camera and took several photos before the bird flew away. I had only a small pocket camera with a 10x power zoom at the time; when I saw the pictures, I was so disappointed with the results that I decided to save my money and buy a good camera. My passion for bird photography took off.

With my new camera in hand, I set out.

The first step was to set up bird feeders in my yard to attract them. I was delighted to see the variety of winter birds in my area. I quickly learned how different birds interacted with each other, which bird species got along with one another and which species were bullies at the feeders.

Among some of the smallest birds that have come to my yard in winter are the blacked-capped chickadees and common redpolls. I have also seen some purple finches but that is a rarer occurrence.

From what I have observed, chickadees are probably the friendliest—if I were to go outdoors with birdseed in my hand, it wouldn't take too long before some chickadees landed on me and ate the seeds right out of my hand. Often, when I go out to fill the feeders, they chatter at me as if to say, "It's about time you came to fill our feeders!"

A common redpoll (top left) and a tiny black-capped chickadee (above) perched in a spruce tree in Daryle's yard.

Clockwise from above: A female pine grosbeak; a tiny white-breasted nuthatch; an evening grosbeak; a colourful hairy woodpecker.

The common redpolls are always a delight to see, and usually arrive in small flocks to the feeders. They are tiny, pretty birds with a shy demeanour.

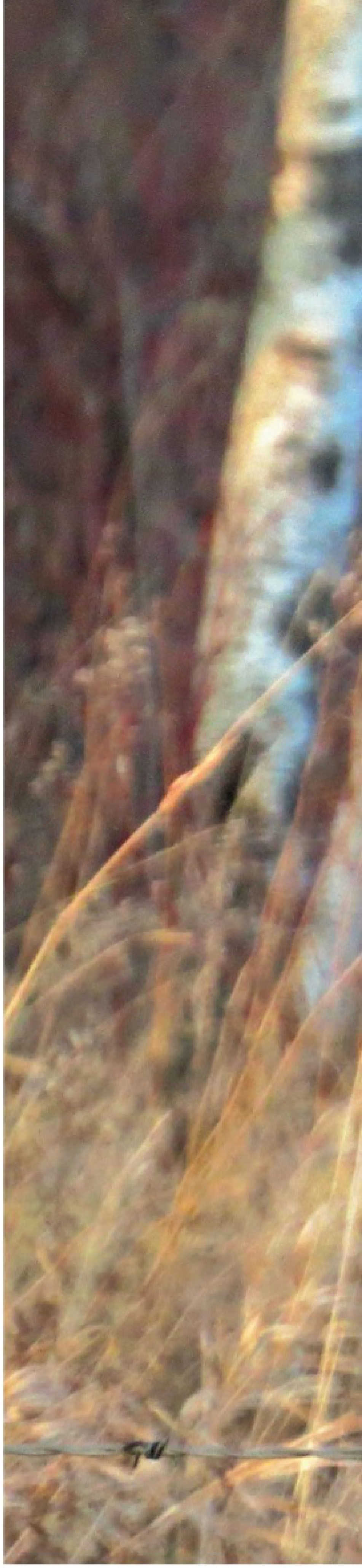
I have also had a few rare visits from purple finches. These birds have pretty red colouring, so it seems strange that they are called purple finches; nonetheless, they are always a welcome sight.

The downy woodpecker, the hairy woodpecker and the white-breasted nuthatch are a bit larger than some of the other birds that visit such as redpolls, finches and chickadees. While the downy woodpecker is smaller than the hairy woodpecker, they both work hard at taking seeds from the feeders and stashing them in nearby trees. The white-breasted nuthatch is also fun to watch as it climbs headfirst down the tree towards the feeders. Nuthatches seem a bit

more skeptical than some of the other birds and will readily fly away when they hear a noise or sense any movement.

Now for what I consider the most beautiful winter birds that I have ever seen: blue jays and pine grosbeaks. The blue jays are the bullies of the feeders. When they show up, all the smaller birds fly away. Last winter, I had at least two dozen or more in my yard, and it does not take too long for the feeders to empty out after they arrive. They may be greedy, but they are probably still my favourite birds to photograph, as there are often many at a time and their colouring is so beautiful.

Then there are the gorgeous pine grosbeaks. The males are a reddish-pink with grey, while the females are grey with a reddish-orange or yellow tint on their heads and backs. I love to get photos of male gros-



beaks as their red colour contrasts nicely against the green of spruce trees with snow-tipped branches. It always reminds me of a Christmas card. I have also had evening grosbeaks in my yard, and they too, are pretty, especially the males who are yellow and black with white plumage. They are a rare but always welcome sight.

We also have predatory birds in my area such as the magpie, snowy owl, short-eared owl and, Manitoba's official bird, the great grey owl.

Magpies are the only birds of prey I've ever spotted in my yard and are likely the most intelligent bird I have ever watched. But they also fly away at the slightest movement. Even when I am moving around in my house, they can sense my movement and quickly fly away. I have managed to get some pictures of them, but it was not easy.

The snowy owl, short-eared owl and the great grey owl are all rare sightings for me as well, as their habitat is not close to where I live, and I must venture out to photograph them. The short-eared owl is a smaller owl; I captured a few photos of one while on my way to town one day. I also took photos of a snowy owl on my way to town. I was beyond excited when I captured a photo of a great grey owl while out on a drive. It was the first and only time I have ever seen one in the wild. They are much larger than both the short-eared owl and snowy owl, and the largest owl in Manitoba.

I always have my camera with me wherever I go, as experience has taught me that you just never know what you may see.

I am incredibly fortunate to be living in an area with such abundance of birds and wildlife. ■

Clockwise from far left: A black-billed magpie snacking on bread crumbs; a great grey owl; a short-eared owl.

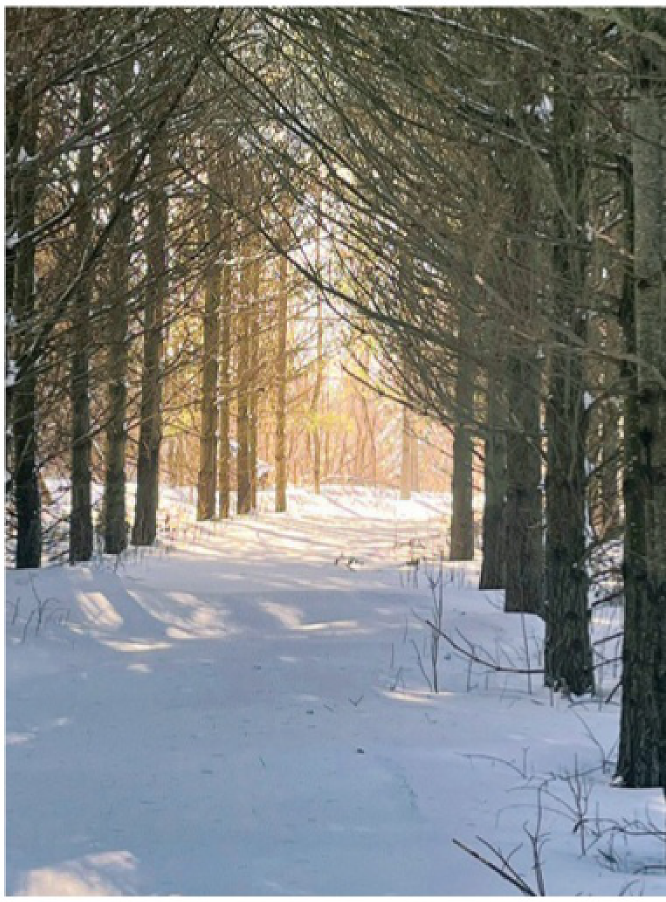
VINTAGE BLADES

Paula Brown of Ottawa shares this image, writing: "My husband, Dave, bought these Bauer hockey skates 50 years ago while attending university. He still uses them, even though his granddaughters find it funny!"

THE MAGIC OF WINTER

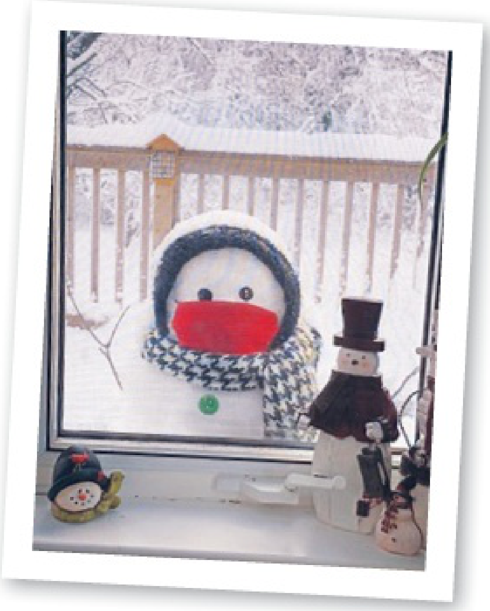
Winter covers everything in a sparkling white coat that glitters in the sunshine like diamonds. I love winter photography. Nature is the perfect muse for taking either colour or monochromatic images. My husband, Michael, and I were out for a ride on the day I took this photo (right), and as we came down the trail, this scene reminded me of something out of *The Chronicles of Narnia*—a portal to another world. Among the pines, we've built a sugar shack, using cedar logs from the original homestead, that are each the size of a rear tractor tire! The site is secluded, protected from the chill of the wind and very quiet. We often see deer, and chickadees follow us, no doubt wondering where we are going and to see if we are carrying seeds for them to snack on. Snowshoe hares leave tracks all around the area and under the woodpile, where they seek shelter during the day. Mice make little tunnels in the snow as they scurry along, protected from predators by the pine canopy overhead. It is a beautiful spot where I often go to sit and recharge. Nature in winter is spectacular!

Louise Leblanc-Mazur,
Apple Hill, Ont.



ANYBODY HOME?

I love this pic (below) because of the story it tells. It is said "A picture paints a thousand words." Well, I'm not sure this is 1,000 words, but during one of our many snowstorms here in New Brunswick last February, we had perfect snow for making a snow-person. My wife, Judy, created this snow-woman, complete with COVID-compliant mask. She is looking longingly in at the other snow-people sitting on the windowsill—wondering why she is not allowed to come inside, where it's nice and warm!



Dannie Brown
Killarney Road, N.B.

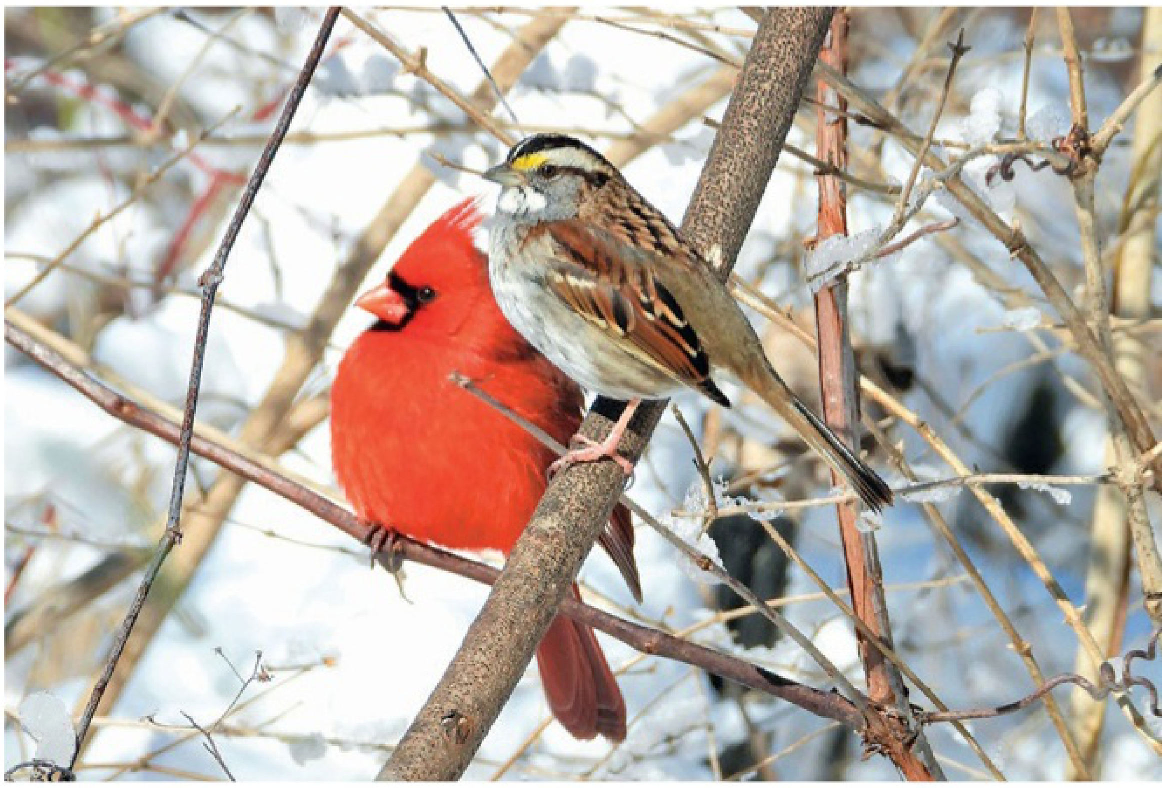
HAVE YOU HEARD THE ONE ABOUT...?

During a lesson about adjectives, a friend who's an elementary school teacher asked her class to describe their mothers.

One boy described his mother's hair as auburn.

Impressed by his sophisticated word choice, my friend asked, "How do you know her hair colour is auburn?"

Her student replied, "Because that's what it says on the box."



CAPTION CORNER

"What part of 'camouflage' didn't you understand, Larry?"

Thanks to **Ankica Pajic** of Windsor, Ont., for sharing this awesome pic! Can you come up with a better caption for it than we did? Join the fun on our Facebook page and share your witty one-liners there. And remember to send your Caption Corner pics to us at **ourcanada.ca**!

CANADA'S CLAIMS TO FAME

OUR GREAT COUNTRY IS HOME TO LOTS OF INTERESTING PEOPLE AND PLACES, SOME FAMOUS, OTHERS WELL-KEPT SECRETS.

A-MAZING!

Canada, perhaps fittingly, is home to the largest snow maze in the world, according to the Guinness Book of World Records. A Maze in Corn is located in St. Adolphe, Man., where, according to their website, Thursdays to Sundays from January to March, you can "enjoy warming areas with bonfires, slide down the giant snow mountain, relax in the warming barn or hop on a sleigh ride!" A big thank you to **Brendene Barkley** of Winnipeg for snapping and sharing this great photo (above).

Source: A Maze in Corn website

Conquering Cancer, COVID & Lifestyle Changes

As that Rolling Stones tune puts it, "You can't always get what you want, but if you try sometimes, you get what you need."

by Leanne Michalofsky, *Tiny, Ont.*

One never knows the challenges we will face over the course of a lifetime. That was especially true as the Coronavirus initially spread throughout our world.

After completing treatment for a second aggressive breast cancer in January 2020, I was ready to move forward. Being an adventurous couple, my husband, Brian, and I had booked a hiking trip in Arizona in March of that year—a reward for all that we had to endure over the previous ten months of my cancer treatment. As COVID continued to escalate, however, we decided to cancel our trip.

In hindsight, it was a smart move because being captive in the United States during the early stages of the pandemic would not have been relaxing. We also knew the canyons of Arizona would always be there. This decision brought about change, as another life lesson transpired: We don't always get what we want, however, we may end up with exactly what we need—at least, that's how my thought process of turning "adversity into action" works.

We all have choices in our lives. I decided to change all that I could for the better, despite continued treatments every six months to keep the spread of cancer to my lymph nodes at bay. I knew I could not change the world. What I could change was myself. I had to continue with drive and a sense of purpose.

My therapy during the COVID-19 experience has been to involve myself in stepping forward, by taking part in virtual events. I chose to honour those who I could truly empathize with. Cycling 60 kilometres during the month of August 2020 for Cycle

Camelot—the Georgian Bay Cycle for Hope—was my first challenge. I chose to raise funds for the Georgian Bay Cancer Centre as my way of giving back. I wanted to empower others and myself as I recovered from the beast of cancer. Recently, I walked 60 kilometres and cycled 20 more over a three-week period for Camp Oochigeas in Muskoka, Ont., in support of kids with cancer. I continue to walk daily, cycle and garden, watching new life rise to the surface.

I consider myself to have grown personally over these last few years. I had a decision to make on this journey of life. I chose to conquer cancer, avoid COVID and welcome change. Losing the battle was not an option I would accept. It is amazing the power we have within ourselves, when we tap into it. Giving up is not my choice. ■

Above, from left: Leanne displaying a Georgian Bay Cancer Support Centre T-shirt; Nikki's moms' group gathered to cheer up a struggling friend.

An Inspiring Group of Moms

When one of the moms in this close-knit friendship circle hit a wall of despair, everyone rallied in support

***by Nikki Delay,** Williams Lake, B.C.*

During one of our weekly Zoom chats last winter, our friend Amanda opened up to us, saying, “It's hard, really hard. To be honest, I'm not doing well at all; I'm really struggling.” Sighing tearfully, she continued, “I miss seeing people and doing things. And living so far out of town is isolating enough without these COVID restrictions. Add to that, it's winter and getting dark out so early, plus it's been so cold this week, I can't even go outside with the kids.”

Tears started to stream down her cheeks as we watched helplessly on our computer screens. Our group of mom-friends had been meeting weekly for years. Over that time, we had helped one another with sickness, newborns, postpartum depression, health scares and even moves to new homes. Now, however, we were separated, unable to reach out in times of need. As the call ended, I sat staring at my computer screen, heartbroken for my friend who was so clearly suffering. Something needed to be done to boost Amanda's spirits, but what? Then, inspiration struck!

It was incredibly short notice, but it had to be done. I immediately began a chat with our mom-group, everyone except Amanda that is. The result? Husbands made sure they were home from work on time to take over parenting duties; vehicles were filled with gas; gifts were purchased; and at 6:00 p.m. that night, a flurry of vehicles met up in the Tim Horton's parking lot in Williams Lake, B.C. One after the other, in a convoy of vans, cars and SUVs, we drove for 30 minutes into the ranch lands of the Cariboo-Chilcotin and down the long driveway of our dear friend Amanda.

The vehicles were maneuvered into a circle near the campfire that Brady, Amanda's husband, had built (“Why the heck is he building a campfire in the driveway on a Tuesday night?” Amanda had wondered). Hatchbacks opened and, bundled in winter coats, snow pants, hats, gloves and blankets, our group of friends sat at the back of our individual vehicles—hot tea at the ready—while Amanda looked on with tears welling in her eyes. This time though, they were tears of joy!

Although there were no hugs that night, there was laughter, joy, friendship and solidarity as our group braved -10°C weather to show one another love, support and strength of community; something that was greatly needed by every single one of us. ■

1st Place | '21/'22 | Regal Pose
Paula Brown | Ottawa, ON

2nd Place | '21/'22 | Eerie Solitude
Gabor Dosa | Surrey, B.C.

3rd Place | '21/'22 | The Wonder Above
Nicola Windsor | Port Coquitlam, B.C.

Our Canada

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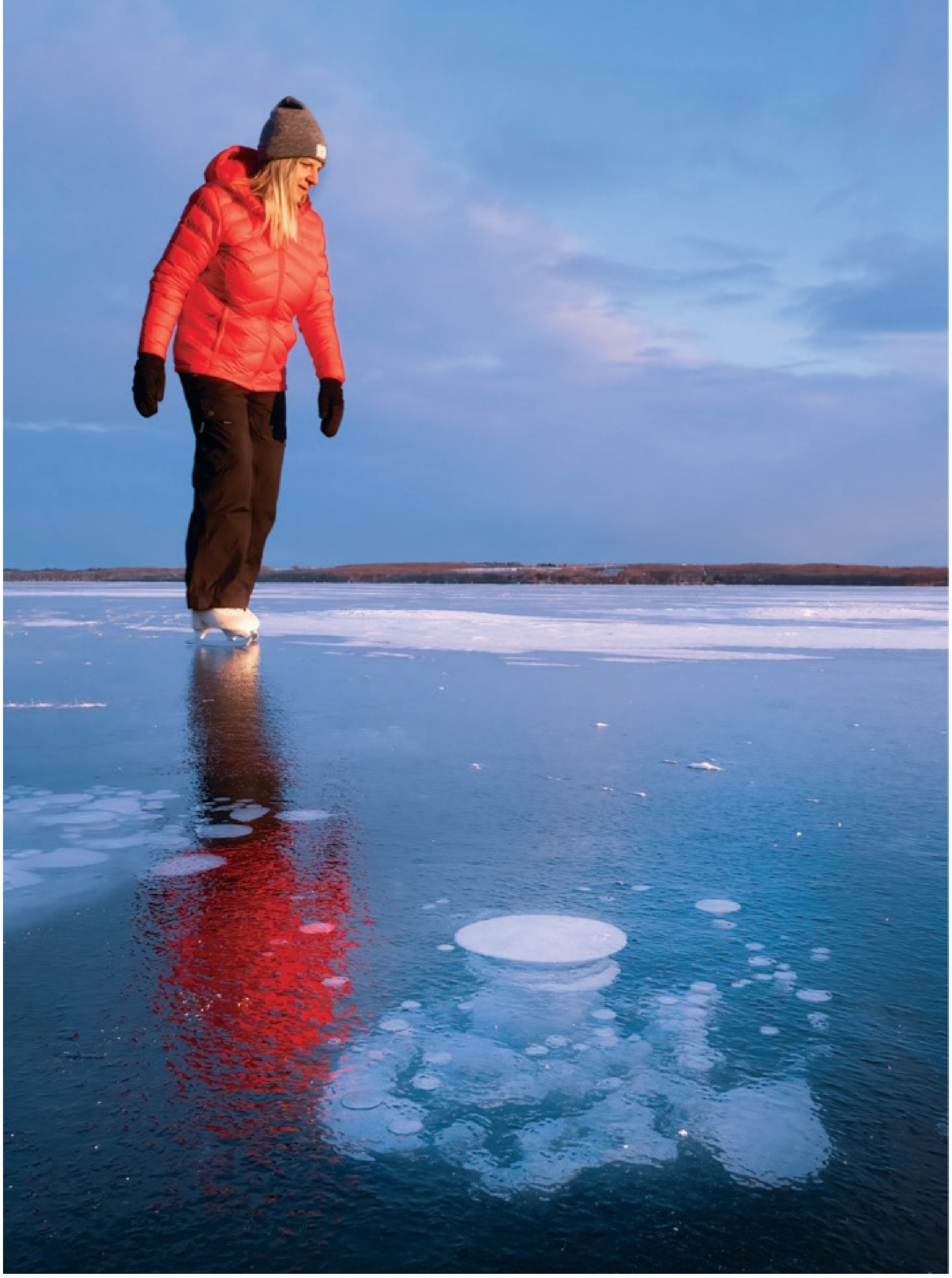
Or mail your entry to OUR CANADA SHARE YOUR CANADA PHOTO CONTEST 2022/2023, P.O. Box 975, STN Main Markham, Ont. L3P 0K7. Complete rules available at ourcanada.ca/shareyourcanada or by writing to The Reader's Digest Association (Canada) ULC, c/o Prize Award Administrator's Office at P.O. Box 963, STN Main Markham, Ont. L3P 0J4.



Gail's friend Carmen, enjoying an early morning skate on Sylvan Lake.

Life Is Good

Friendship and beautiful surroundings help create memorable moments

by Gail Kirkelund, *Rocky Mountain House, Alta.*

I love this photo, as it shows how we can thoroughly enjoy even very cold days with the help of wonderful friends getting together in stunning surroundings. I was thrilled to get a call from my friend Carmen, telling me that while out skating, she had spotted methane bubbles on Sylvan Lake, named for the Alberta town where she lives. It was early December and we would normally have to wait until late December or early January to take our usual drive to photograph bubbles at Abraham Lake—a man-made lake located two hours farther west.

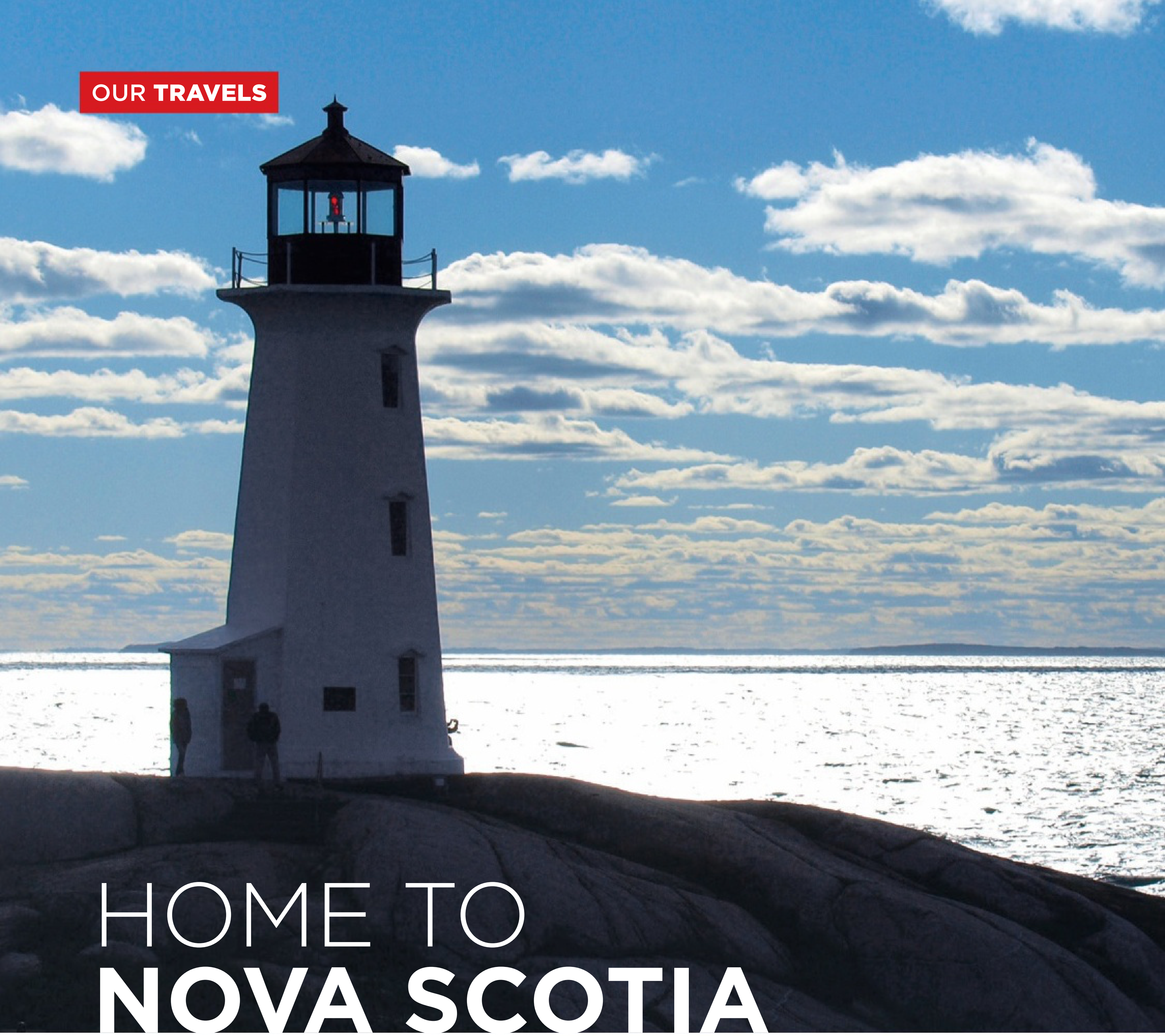
Carmen lives about an hour from me, so we arranged to meet just before 7 a.m.; I dug out my warm mitts, boots and hand-warmer pads, then headed to our meeting place. We had planned to first try to capture a shot of Comet Leonard before the sun came up, but clouds developed over the area and made it impossible to spot. I don't know if I would have captured it anyway, but for sure you won't if you don't try.

We still had plenty of time before sunrise, so we chatted and waited for the clouds to shift. Those same clouds now helped us capture great photos of both the bubbles and a beautiful sunrise.

Carmen had brought her skates with her, so as she skated between the bubbles and snowpack on the lake, we were able to take photographs. I snapped this photo of Carmen in the early morning light; to me, it epitomizes the value of the friends we hang out with, the wonderful diversity of our Canadian climate and the vast array of our landscapes. Thanks, Carmen, for making this possible.

As I drove home, satisfied and hopeful that I got at least one good shot, I turned up the heater and, with a smile on my face, thought: Life is good. ■

OUR **TRAVELS**



HOME TO **NOVA SCOTIA**

Favourite sites, time with Mom and an historic hurricane made this a memorable trip

by Maria Powell, *Calgary*

Since moving away from Dartmouth, N.S., in 1995, I have made an effort to visit my friends and family at least once a year whenever possible; Nova Scotia will always be my home.

In recent years, I have chosen September as my travel month when the summer humidity has subsided, and the province is less overrun with tourists in comparison to July and August. My hubby, Paul, and I arrived in mid-September for close to two weeks and spent the first five nights at an Airbnb in downtown Dartmouth. It offers easy access to the beautiful Halifax Waterfront by ferry or bridge, and to many areas of interest in the area including Dartmouth's own Sullivan's Pond.

Early in our trip we visited one of my favourite places, the Halifax Public Gardens, where the dahlias—such interesting blossoms to photograph—along with a variety of other types of flowers, are still in bloom at that time of year. Paul enjoyed listening to local musician Bill Jardine, who was entertaining visitors with his singing and guitar playing in front of the bandstand, while I

flitted through the gardens taking photographs and enjoying a visit from a stunning monarch butterfly that perched on a plant called a butterfly bush.

Later, we headed south to spend some time at world-famous Peggy's Cove, a picturesque fishing village. No matter the weather, Peggy's Cove is a very special place with fishing boats, giant rocks to walk on—stay off of the wet, black ones—quaint shops to explore, a restaurant specializing in seafood, a new boardwalk for people with accessibility challenges, and Peggy's Point Lighthouse. We had the sheer delight of very windy weather that day resulting in breathtaking waves crashing against the rocks. It made for great photo ops—a special

Main photo: Peggy's Cove Lighthouse. Inset from top down: Halifax Harbour; Bill Jardine in Halifax Public Gardens; a pretty monarch butterfly; a gorgeous dahlia; Maria's husband, Paul, at Peggy's Cove.

CABLE WHARF
KITCHEN & PATIO

HARBOUR MIST

Main photo: Peggy's Cove fishing village. Inset from top down: *Tall Ship Silva*; Paul hoisting the sail; exploring along Sunset Drive; a post-storm sky over Maria's friend Tina's backyard.

thanks to the seagull that flew past my lens at the perfect moment.

Another highlight of our time in the Halifax/Dartmouth area was taking a cruise around the Halifax Harbour on the *Tall Ship Silva*. When they asked for volunteers to help hoist the sail, Paul jumped at the opportunity. It was Paul's first time on a boat like this, and it really added to his Maritime experience. We sailed for an hour-and-a-half and saw some notable Halifax landmarks including Georges Island National Historic Site and McNabs Island, as well as a massive passenger cruise ship called *Mein Schiff 1* from Malta that was in port that day.

The next part of our journey was four nights spent on the eastern shore where

MORE INFO

- Nova Scotia is home to more than 160 historic lighthouses; these majestic beacons can be found throughout the province.
- Peggy's Point Lighthouse also known as Peggy's Cove Lighthouse is one of Nova Scotia's most well-known lighthouses and may be the most photographed in Canada.
- Located in the quaint fishing village of Peggy's Cove along the South Shore, Peggy's Point Lighthouse was built in 1915.
- When visiting, exercise caution at all times, as the ocean water around Peggy's cove is dangerous. Rogue waves commonly splash up over the rocks, even on calm, sunny days.

Source: Nova Scotia website

we stayed with my mom, Lucille, in Malay Falls, just northeast of Sheet Harbour. Although it rained for the majority of our time there, we enjoyed relaxing, playing Canasta and baking with Mom, and visiting with friends. When the sun did shine, we spent an afternoon exploring various coves with scenic views along East River Road, St. Andrews Loop and Sunset Drive.

We returned to Dartmouth for our final three nights just as Hurricane Fiona was due to hit the area. We stayed with my best friend, Tina, and her family who were wonderful hosts, especially when we lost power. Sadly, there was a lot of devastation in the neighbourhood as well as across the province. I took photographs of the aftermath to document the devastation. The night after the storm, we were blessed with a beautiful sky.

I always love returning to my home province—our time there was wonderful and memorable. ■

Our 1959 Immigration

Seeking new opportunities, a Dutch couple and their three young daughters happily acclimatize to Canada's culture, languages—and winters! ***by Marianne Detmar,*** *Brantford, Ont.*

It was July 1959 when we set sail from Rotterdam, the Netherlands, to Canada on the SS *Waterman*. There we were, my parents and the three of us—my older sister, Wilma; myself, Marianne; and my younger sister, Reinie. I am not sure of the date we left, but I remember Wilma having a birthday party on the ship on July 17. She turned nine and it was so much fun to have a celebration on the huge ship. I had turned seven a few months earlier, and Reinie was only two.

It seemed like a very long voyage; I believe it was about ten days. I still remember the cheers from fellow passengers when land was spotted. Everyone was so excited. We landed in Montreal, got on a train to Toronto, and then continued to St. Marys, I think my dad's brother, who lived in that small Ontario town, got the time of our arrival wrong, as he wasn't at the train station. Since we couldn't yet speak English, our name was given to the police, who took us to my uncle's place very late at night. That was a great start! Good thing it was a small town where most people knew each other.

The next day, my uncle took us to the beef-cattle farm near Staffa, Ont., where we would live for a few years. Back then, you had to be sponsored and guaranteed a job with income. The farm was owned by our sponsors, the Millers. These folks were awesome and treated us so well. They provided for us as we waited for most of our possessions to arrive by crate from the Netherlands.

I'm sure the language barrier proved difficult for my parents and the Millers, but we all got along famously. We spent many suppertimes at their home, eating new foods we were not used to—

but oh, so good. We were very fortunate to have such an amazing family look after us.

Life in Canada

Next came school. Both Wilma and I were held back one grade because we could not speak much English. Upon learning new words, we excitedly went home and taught our parents.

Our first trip to the corner store in Staffa was interesting, to say the least. Most things my mom could find and some items were indicated by hand gestures—amazingly the store clerk understood. We needed some kitchen pots; Mom thought three would do, but the clerk proceeded to pack four. But no, no—not four, only three. So, up went three fingers. Little did we know that when you bought three, No. 4 was free. When my parents weren't looking, the clerk packaged up all four.

My dad, who smoked at that time, was excited they had his brand, Camel. But when we got home, he realized they were candy cigarettes. We were quite happy; but Dad...not so much.

It was such an exciting day when the crates finally arrived with some of our furniture and housewares—and best of all, our Dutch bikes. We could now ride to school. I remember the other kids were in awe because of our novel-looking upright bikes and wanted to ride them around the schoolyard. Well, we charged a nickel per ride! We thought it was a good plan, until Dad found out and put a stop to it. I think he even made us give the money back!

Clockwise from top far left: Aboard the SS *Waterman* on departure day, with Marianne at right; (from left) Reinie, Mom, Marianne and Wilma receiving parcels from Holland; Wilma and Marianne (right) enjoying their first Canadian winter; the beef-cattle farm in Staffa, Ont., where the family lived upon arrival.

Then came the first winter. Wow, the snow! We had never seen so much white stuff. As kids, we enjoyed it; but my parents didn't like it too much. That first Christmas, we couldn't afford a tree, so Dad got a two-by-four, made a stand and nailed a lot of pine branches to it (there were many pine trees on the property). We had a beautiful tree that year. My mom was quite homesick those first few years, so receiving parcels and letters from Holland was always quite a treat.

Brave New World

We discovered quite a lot of new things in this new land. My first encounter with a garter snake came when I was sent out to the family garden to get a couple of onions. I came running into the house, white as a ghost and with no onions, as I tried to explain this slithering thing. I still do not like snakes to this day.

Another novel experience: We had an old Ford car that we had to park on the barn hill, by the hayloft entrance, so it would have a downhill run to allow it to start. Still, it got us where we wanted to go.

Regardless, we soon started to feel quite at home in Canada. We found a family church in Exeter, Ont.: Bethel Reformed. Most folks there were Dutch immigrants. How great for my parents to find so many new friends with a common bond! So many stories were told of coping and settling quite nicely in this country. Looking back, those were good times.

We moved to three different farms after Staffa—all of them dairy farms, which I loved. We eventually settled in St. Marys, as Dad had gotten a good job at a factory in nearby Stratford.

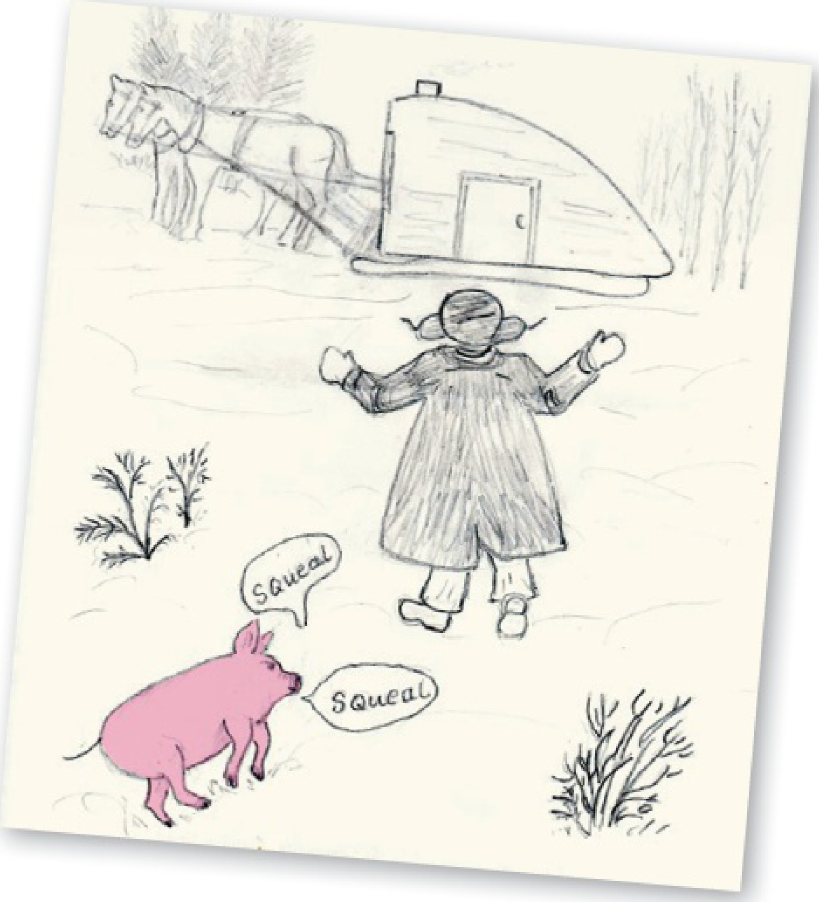
I have been back to Holland many times, as I still have family there, but I am always glad to return home to Canada. My parents, Kase and Joan Van Arkel, have since passed away, but my sisters and I are happy they made that difficult decision back in 1959, as we love this great country of ours. ■

SHARE your family's story about coming to Canada at **ourcanada.ca** or see page 64 for our address.

My Friend JEANIE

Arriving one cold night, this tiny piglet warmed the heart of a little girl, and a lasting friendship was born

by Wilma Hansen, *Fort St. John, B.C.*



At top right and on the facing page are Wilma's sketches of life with Jeanie.

It was a cold night in March on a farm near Tisdale, Sask., when wee Jeanie was born. Her mother disliked her and tried to get rid of her by pushing her into a cold corner by herself. She was away from her other siblings, with nothing to eat. My brother-in-law, John, went out to check up on the new family and found this small, red piglet freezing, so he decided to bring her into our house. To warm her, he placed her in a small box with straw, which he tucked around her, and then put the box on the open oven door. This was our kitchen wood cook stove, which produced heat without burning her. With some warm milk and lots of rubbing, she started to look like she would live, and then she went to sleep.

With the loving care of John, my sister Edna, and myself, Jeanie did very well. And once the snow was gone, she was ready to go outside and live in the straw stacks with the dogs. She never associated with the other pigs, as of course they were beneath her—after all, they lived in the pigpen. I am sure a dog is what she chose to be. She always welcomed us home and hung around the back door, ready for a snack, scratch or rub on the back, or maybe a friendly word, which she answered with her little pig grunts.

In springtime I always headed out to play at the ravine, where a nice stream of water ran. It was just right for "sailing sticks" (beautiful sailing ships). It was so nice to be outside in the fresh warm air after a long winter indoors. The grass was getting green, with yellow flowers sprouting here and there. Birds were singing, an odd butterfly fluttered around, green buds were coming out on the trees and the pussy willows were in full bloom. I was taking my play friends with me: the cats, the dogs and now Jeanie. It was just like a parade. I was singing and Jeanie was oinking along. The cats were playing catch-up, racing ahead and then pretending to be hunting in the dead long grass, and the dogs were chasing the cats. Of course, there was the stream to play in, but my rubber boots were never quite high enough; I always got wet and then got into trouble for getting wet. I made up my mind that I would never give my children a hard time for getting wet or dirty, or for ripping their clothes!

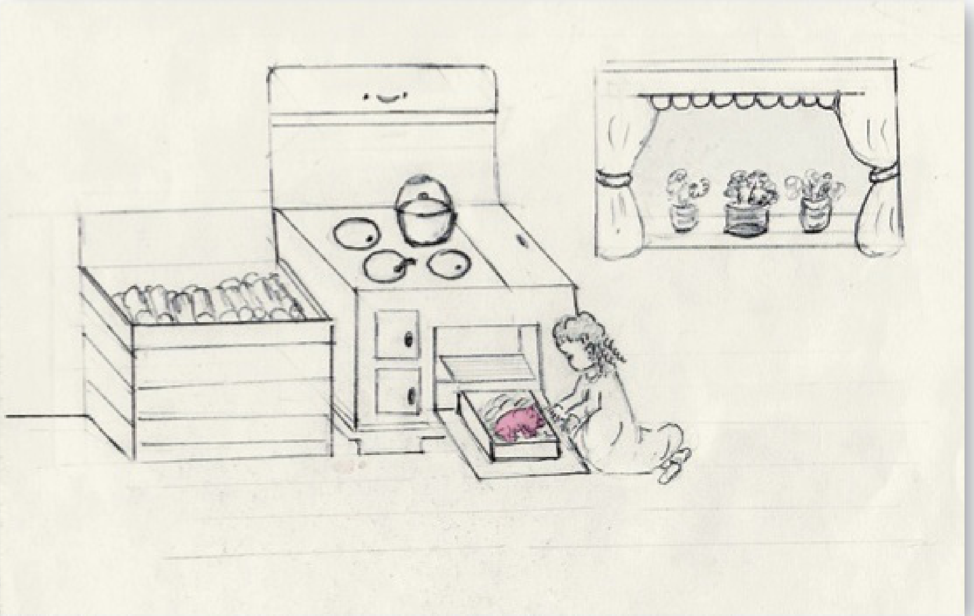
Jeanie and I had a splendid time that summer. I would ride on her back and she would go along with this for a while—before heading for the small poplar trees that grew quite close together. She would run between them as fast as her short legs could go, with me yelling at the top of my lungs, and eventually managed to dislodge me from her back. I was seven at this time, so my front teeth were getting loose. One day, I flew off her back and smacked into a tree—and that was the end of my two front teeth.

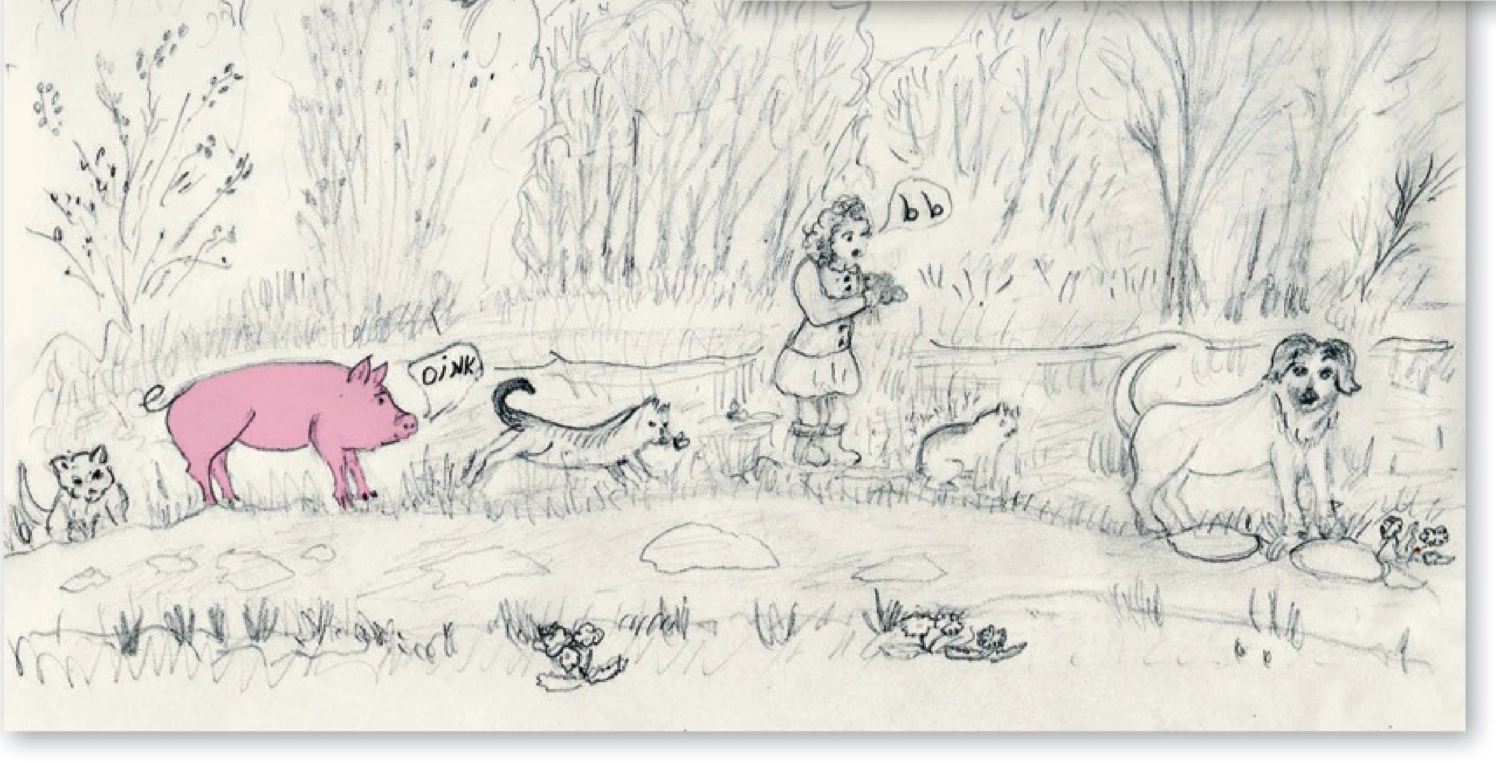
By that winter, Jeanie was a good-sized red pig. In those days, the cattle buyer would come to your farm to check out whether you had any animals for sale. One day, in drove a team of horses with a green “caboose.” A caboose was one set of sleigh runners with a little house built on it. This house held a small wood stove, a seat built to sit on and a window in front, with holes for the lines to go out to the horses so you could drive them. The horses stopped, the door flew open and out stepped this large, black, furry thing. I am sure Jeanie thought it was a bear or something worse. She took one look, let out an eerie squeal and headed for that “furry thing”—the cattle buyer. He quickly decided this was no place for him: You never saw someone that size move so fast, jumping back into the caboose in a hurry, his black coat and earflaps on his hat a-flapping.

The following spring, Jeanie became a momma of eight red piglets. She and her family were free to come and go as they pleased, since she didn’t go far. She seemed to know that this yard was her home and that the straw pile was her warm bedroom.

At the time, there was a bus route between Tisdale and nearby Wadena. John’s sister lived in Wadena, so Edna and I decided to take the bus and head there for a few days on holiday. The highway was only a short walk from home, but you couldn’t see it, as our house was hidden by trees. As we got off the bus upon our return, I spotted Jeanie coming to meet us, with her large family in tow. I was overjoyed at seeing her. I got so excited, jumping up and down, yelling: “Oh, Jeanie, Jeanie! Oh, there’s my Jeanie!” My poor sister was embarrassed to tears. She likely felt like putting a dirty sock in my mouth to shut me up.

Jeanie was part of my life from ages six to nine—but her memory will never fade. ■





Rock, Rock, Rocking Chair

This tiny, handmade rocker has provided comfort and companionship to four generations of children

by Melba Jean Verkland, *Calgary*

In a room in my basement sits a rocking chair, still and lonely. It has a 104-year-old history and four generations to attest to its longevity.

Back in the early 1920s near Cutknife, Sask., my mom's parents had developed a large farm. The red barn, in the shape of a house, sat atop a rock-and-cement foundation. The house itself was a large two-storey structure, home to a family of seven. My mother was the youngest of five children. At the age of three, her mother developed pneumonia and died. That must have been a very sad year for my mom. I understand she came down with red measles as well. To keep her warm and out of the light, as measles affects your eyesight, she was kept wrapped in her dad's buffalo coat.

About this time is when the little rocking chair came into the picture. It was built out of local wood and stained dark brown, and was made by either her dad or a neighbour. An intricate design was tooled on the top back of the chair. I believe the chair was intended to help soothe her of all the trauma she was likely going through having lost her mom, having measles and only receiving limited attention from her siblings as they were busy with school or helping with farm chores.

Mom told me that her eldest sister, around 18 at the time, took on the responsibility for indoor chores and looking after their siblings as best she could.

I'm sure Mom probably spent a lot of time clutching her baby doll and rocking in that chair. Apparently, when her dad remarried five years later, her new stepmom began sewing, cooking and, best of all, doting on Mom. She started feeling good about herself and very special in her new clothes with her hair always neatly done. I'm sure her rocker remained a consoling friend, even as she outgrew it.

Eventually her parents left the Saskatchewan farm and moved further west to a homestead in Grande Prairie, Alta. Mom attended school there up to Grade 10 and then began working in a local five-and-dime store.

During mom's youth the chair was probably in her bedroom with her favourite doll perched in it! After that, it may have been moved to a closet or the attic.

Next Generation

Eventually, Mom met the love of her life—a grain buyer, married him, then had me a year later. This was just before the Second World War. My dad enlisted when I was two and he was sent down east with the Royal Canadian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (RCEME) for two years. I had no playmates as we lived on an acreage on a corner of my grandparents farm. I became very attached to my stuffies and my pets, playing house and Sunday school. I used the little rocking chair for the teacher sometimes, or the pupils other times. It rocked my cat, Fluffy, and my pet hen that was kept indoors at night behind the stove, and it rocked my favourite teddy bear and all my other dolls and stuffies. Even after I outgrew this wooden chair it continued to sit in my bedroom.

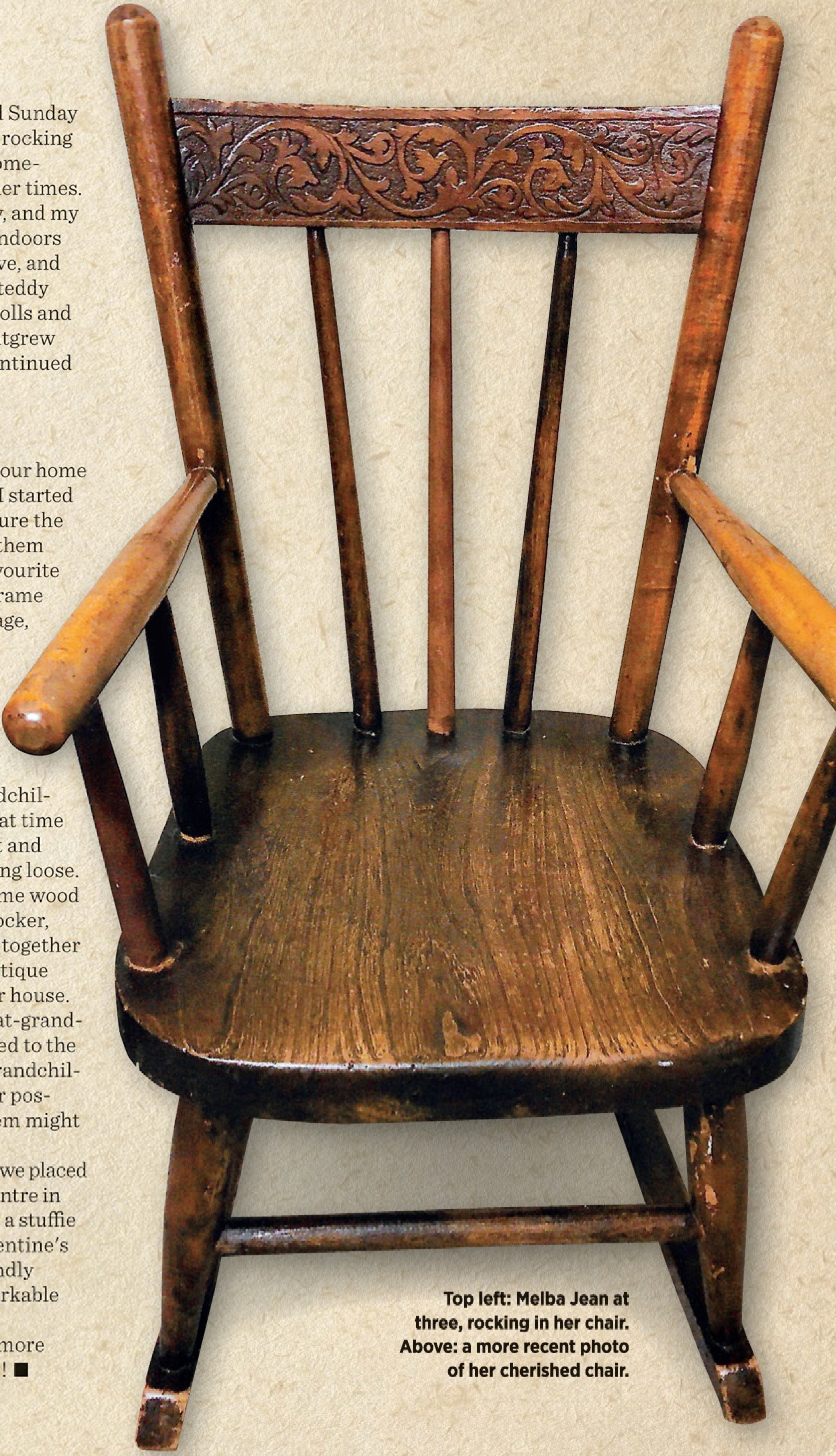
Legacy of Love

It became a treasure in our home when my husband and I started a family. We would secure the little ones in it to rock them as they clung onto a favourite stuffie or toy. As door frame bouncers became the rage, the chair was only used after the little ones could walk and talk. As long as it was near their play area, it was rocked.

Years later, our grandchildren came along. By that time the glue was drying out and the rungs were becoming loose. Great-Grandpa had some wood glue and mended the rocker, which today still holds together very well. This little antique now has a corner in our house. If there ever is any great-grandchildren it will be passed to the fifth generation. Our grandchildren want it kept in our possession until one of them might require it.

At my mom's funeral we placed this rocker front and centre in front of her casket with a stuffie she'd received one Valentine's Day. Some relatives fondly remembered this remarkable piece of furniture.

May it keep rocking more little ones in the future! ■



Top left: Melba Jean at three, rocking in her chair. Above: a more recent photo of her cherished chair.

The Fudge Pot

This old, broken kitchen utensil keeps a daughter and her late mother connected

by Andrea Adair-Tippins, *Whitby, Ont.*

My mom was forever leaving things at my house. She wasn't forgetful; she sneakily left objects behind, such as a plate her mother acquired from a friend of a friend, and ratty tablecloths some great-great-ancestor on her father's side made. She thought they were heirlooms I would cherish, and she'd tuck them into a cabinet or drawer, where I'd find them days or weeks later. I appreciated the history, but I had enough clutter in my house and didn't need her to add to it.

And I definitely didn't need her fudge pot. Once upon a time, the pot was a shiny silver beauty—solid aluminum with a black sturdy handle and a silver hook on the end to hang it. In addition to fudge, mince beef (ground steak bought from the grocer up the street), beef stew (also from the local butcher) and my grandmother's "stovies" (a Scottish potatoey, beefy soup) all flourished in that pot. By the time it showed up in my kitchen, however, it had seen better days. A stubby piece of metal jutted out from one side, with an empty hole where the black handle should be. Without the handle, it was impossible to hold—not ideal for a cooking utensil. The stubby end was too small for oven mitts or pot holders to grasp. Mom often set tea towels on fire, holding the lip of the pot with the towel and not noticing the ends dangling over the element until they started to smoke. It also didn't sit flat. The bottom, blackened from use, wobbled and rocked when stirring the contents of the pot—if you managed to get a hold of it.

Below, from left: Andrea and her mom; the famous fudge pot; the delectable treat itself.

BITTERSWEET MEMORIES

Yet for some reason, it was the only pot Mom used to make her fudge. Old-fashioned, brown-sugar, melt-in-your-mouth fudge may not seem special today, with so many different flavours such as cheesecake, mint and peanut butter to tempt your palate. Mom's fudge was always more sugary granular than smooth and creamy. But it tasted good. Really good. And that pot had the right amount of depth for when the melting sugar magically bubbled up; her candy thermometer attached to the side and immersed in the mixture rather than against the pot. Mom watched the pot (the only time I think she did so while cooking), waiting as the temperature rose until it hit "soft ball." Then she would drop a bit of the mixture into a cup of cold water to test that it would really form into a soft ball. The boiling fudge, when it hit the water, would solidify just enough to make it resemble taffy.

Truth be told, getting to eat the soft-ball test was my favourite part—even more than the fudge itself. Once the mixture was fully "soft ball," she'd beat it with a wooden spoon until her arm gave out, and then she'd finish the job with a mixer. All in the beat-up pot. A handleless pot was useless to me and took up space in my cramped kitchen. I wanted to toss it, but then the sneaky sneak started making fudge at my house for her granddaughters. She turned my children into the next soft-ball testers and fudge connoisseurs. So, the pot stayed, pushed to the bottom of the drawer and used only when Mom came to make fudge.

And then one day, she died; horrible, stupid, life-stealing cancer. The pandemic stopped her from being diagnosed, much less treated. And suddenly she was just gone. I took the pot out for her funeral, planning to make fudge for the few people we were allowed to have. But the fudge was horrible. I couldn't eat it. It would not be a good memory of my mom if I told the others it was her fudge. So, the pot went back in the drawer at the bottom, with the better, more usable pots stacked inside.

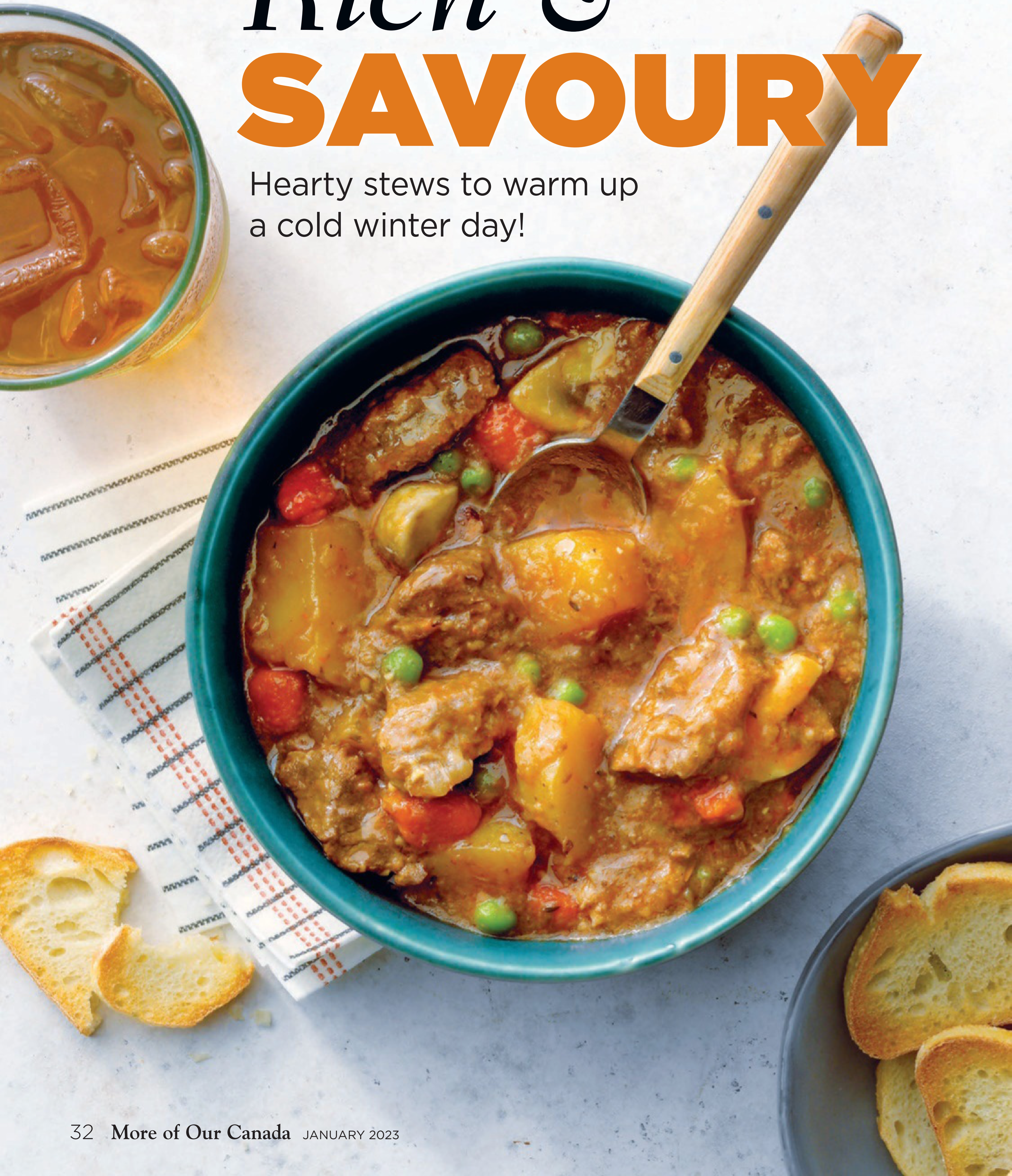
MADE WITH LOVE

On the first anniversary of Mom's death, I took the pot out again. Maybe I needed distance from the pain, the raw ache her death brought. Maybe I needed something more than memories to connect me to her on that day. But I found myself wanting to make it right—my mom's fudge. I wasn't thinking about Mom while I made it. I thought only about getting to the end product. Yet at each step, I felt my mom beside me. As I stirred the cream and milk into the sugar until the gritty feeling was gone, I felt her nodding and saying, "That's right, Andrea." As I watched the mixture boil and bubble and rise up the walls of the pot, I heard her say, "Just a little longer, dear." I could hear her reminding me not to let the candy thermometer touch the pot. As I beat the mixture, I somehow just knew when it was time to pour it into the pan (also sneakily left by her) to let it set. When it was time to serve it, I held my breath, hoping it was her fudge, hoping for everyone to taste it, to say, "That's it, that's her fudge." It mattered that I get it right. I'd spent the last year grieving, chastising myself for the times I was busy with my family and didn't make time for her. I regretted arguments we'd had and harsh words spoken—feeling I had failed her as a daughter in so many ways. But making the fudge, hearing her voice nudging me along in a gentle, encouraging way, like she had so many times in my life, I somehow knew, even if I let her down, she still loved me.

I finally heard her voice in my head instead of my own, all because of the fudge. And I shouldn't be surprised to feel her, because at the end of the day, when Mom poured that fudge, she was really pouring love. She made up fudge baggies for special neighbourhood kids on Halloween; she took fudge to her mechanic and his staff, to doctors and pharmacy assistants; she'd make a batch for her nieces and friends that she had tea with; and she made her fudge for us and then the grandkids. She never had a lot of money, but she had a lot of love. And that's what I felt a year after her death—her love. Turns out I needed that fudge pot after all. ■

Rich & SAVOURY

Hearty stews to warm up a cold winter day!



CHICKEN AND SWEET POTATO STEW

"Are you tired of the same old dinnertime fare? Then spice it up with a Malaysian-inspired chicken stew. Served on a bed of couscous, this recipe for two is as good as it gets."

Agnes Ward,
Stratford, Ont.

Total Time: 30 minutes
Yield: 2 servings

⅔	**lbs boneless skinless chicken breasts, cut into 1-in. cubes**
½	**tsp minced fresh gingerroot**
1	**garlic clove, minced**
½	**tsp olive oil**
½	**cup chopped onion**
½	**cup chopped sweet red pepper**
½	**tsp ground coriander**
½	**tsp ground cumin**
½	**tsp curry powder**
Dash	**ground cinnamon**
1½	**cups cubed peeled sweet potatoes**
¾	**cup reduced-sodium chicken broth**
1	**cup water**
1	**tbsp thawed orange juice concentrate**
½	**cup uncooked couscous**
1	**tbsp cornstarch**
6	**tbsp light coconut milk**
1	**tbsp minced fresh cilantro**

1. In a large skillet, sauté the chicken, ginger and garlic in oil until chicken juices run clear. Add the onion, pepper and seasonings, then sauté 4-5 minutes longer. Add sweet potatoes and broth. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover and simmer for 10-12 minutes or until tender.
2. Meanwhile, in a small saucepan, bring water and orange juice concentrate to a boil. Stir in couscous. Cover and remove from the heat, and let stand for 5-10 minutes or until water is absorbed. Fluff with a fork.
3. Combine cornstarch and coconut milk until smooth. Stir into chicken mixture. Bring to a boil, then cook and stir for 2 minutes or until thickened. Stir in cilantro. Serve with couscous.

NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION
Amount Per Serving (1½ cups chicken mixture with 1 cup couscous): 578 calories, 12 g fat, 84 mg cholesterol, 345 mg sodium, 75 g carbohydrate, 15 g sugars, 7 g fibre, 41 g protein.

SPICY LENTIL & **CHICKPEA STEW**

"This recipe came to me from a friend who had worked at a health food store. I changed a few things until I found a version that my family loved. My son doesn't like things too spicy, so I make the stew milder for him and add a sprinkle of extra spice in mine. My husband, who farms, works outdoors for long hours at a time and finds this dish hearty enough to keep him satisfied."

Melanie MacFarlane,
Bedeque, P.E.I.

Prep Time: 25 minutes
Cook Time: 8 hours
Yield: 8 servings (2¾ quarts)

1. In a small skillet, heat oil over medium-high heat. Add onion, oregano and pepper flakes, cook and stir until onion is tender, 8-10 minutes. Transfer to a 5- or 6-qt. slow cooker.
2. Add chickpeas, lentils, olives and paprika, then stir in broth and tomato sauce. Cook, covered, on low 8-10 hours, until lentils are tender. Stir in spinach. Top servings with yogurt.

2	teaspoons olive oil
1	medium onion, thinly sliced
1	teaspoon dried oregano
½	teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
2	cans (15 ounces each) garbanzo beans or chickpeas, rinsed and drained
1	cup dried lentils, rinsed
1	can (2¼ ounces) sliced ripe olives, drained
3	teaspoons smoked paprika
4	cups vegetable broth
4	cans (8 ounces each) no-salt-added tomato sauce
4	cups fresh baby spinach
¾	cup fat-free plain yogurt

NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION

Amount Per Serving (1⅓ cups): 266 calories, 4 g fat, 0 cholesterol, 712 mg sodium, 45 g carbohydrate, 11 g sugars, 10 g fibre, 14 g protein.

"Rich and hearty, this stew is my husband's favourite. The beef is incredibly tender. Served with crusty bread, it's an ideal cool-weather meal and perfect for any Irish holiday."

Carrie Karleen,
St. Nicolas, Que.

IRISH BEEF STEW

Prep Time: 40 minutes
Cook Time: 3¼ hours
Yield: 15 servings (3¾ quarts)

1. In a stockpot, cook bacon over medium heat until crisp. Using a slotted spoon, remove to paper towels.
2. In a large shallow dish, combine flour, salt and pepper. Add beef, a few pieces at a time, and turn to coat. Brown beef in the bacon drippings. Remove and set aside.
3. In the same pot, sauté the mushrooms, leeks, carrots and celery in oil until tender. Add garlic, cook 1 minute longer. Stir in tomato paste until blended. Add the broth, beer, bay leaves, thyme, parsley and rosemary. Return beef and bacon to pot. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover and simmer until beef is tender, about 2 hours.
4. Add potatoes. Return to a boil. Reduce heat, cover and simmer until potatoes are tender, about 1 hour longer. Combine cornstarch and water until smooth, then stir into stew. Bring to a boil, cook and stir until thickened, about 2 minutes. Add peas and heat through. Discard bay leaves.

8	**bacon strips, diced**
⅓	**cup all-purpose flour**
1	**tsp salt**
½	**tsp pepper**
3	**lbs beef stew meat, cut into 1-in. cubes**
1	**lb whole fresh mushrooms, quartered**
3	**medium leeks (white portion only), chopped**
2	**medium carrots, chopped**
¼	**cup chopped celery**
1	**tbsp canola oil**
4	**garlic cloves, minced**
1	**tbsp tomato paste**
4	**cups reduced-sodium beef broth**
1	**cup dark stout beer or additional reduced-sodium beef broth**
2	**bay leaves**
1	**tsp dried thyme**
1	**tsp dried parsley flakes**
1	**tsp dried rosemary, crushed**
2	**lbs Yukon Gold potatoes, cut into 1-in. cubes**
2	**tbsp cornstarch**
2	**tbsp cold water**
1	**cup frozen peas**

NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION

Amount Per Serving: (1 cup): 301 calories, 13 g fat, 66 mg cholesterol, 441 mg sodium, 21 g carbohydrate, 3 g sugars, 2 g fibre, 23 g protein.

SPRING-THYME CHICKEN STEW

"During a long winter, my husband and I were in need of something warm, comforting and bright. This chicken was the perfect thing. It fills the house with the smell of home when Mom would make chicken soup, with a little something extra."

Amy Chase,
Vanderhoof, B.C.

Prep Time: 15 minutes
Cook Time: 7 hours
Yield: 4 servings

1. Place potatoes, onion and carrots in a 3-qt. slow cooker. Sprinkle with flour, garlic, lemon zest, thyme, salt and pepper; toss to coat. Place chicken over top. Add broth and bay leaves.
2. Cook, covered, on low 7-9 hours or until chicken and vegetables are tender. Remove bay leaves. Sprinkle servings with parsley.

1	**lb small red potatoes, halved**
1	**large onion, finely chopped**
¾	**cup shredded carrots**
3	**tbsp all-purpose flour**
6	**garlic cloves, minced**
2	**tsp grated lemon zest**
2	**tsp dried thyme**
½	**tsp salt**
¼	**tsp pepper**
1½	**lbs boneless skinless chicken thighs, halved**
2	**cups reduced-sodium chicken broth**
2	**bay leaves**
2	**tbsp minced fresh parsley**

NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION

Amount Per Serving (1 serving): 395 calories, 13 g fat, 113 mg cholesterol, 707 mg sodium, 32 g carbohydrate, 5 g sugars, 4 g fibre, 37 g protein.

WEIGHTS CONVERSION CHART									
IMPERIAL	1 oz	6 oz	1 tsp	1 tbsp	¼ cup	½ cup	¾ cup	1 cup	2 lbs
METRIC	30 g	185 g	5 ml	15 ml	60 ml	125 ml	180 ml	250 ml	1 kg

A Lesson in Bread Making

Mastering Mom's "a little of this and lots of that" method of baking was tricky but tasty!

by Gloria Hansen, *Thessalon, Ont.*

Books of recipes gather dust in my house. This is a meat-and-potatoes type of family. If I stray from conventional meals by using a cookbook, my attempts at sprucing up our boring meals are met with reactions from detailed scrutiny to: "What is this?" Ultimately, the offending dish is left to me and the cat, and since she eats like a bird, I am left to consume the unwanted victuals over the next few days. The same goes for sweets. If it isn't chocolate cake or chocolate-chip cookies, it isn't worth eating, say the people who share my living quarters. Correction: Summertime adds variation to their rigid menu—strawberry shortcake and blueberry pie. And you guessed it—they hate picking berries. As you can see, there is not much sense in hauling out a book of recipes for stick-in-the-mud creatures of habit, food-wise. Besides, the recipes and instructions within have no similarity to the way I was taught to prepare food. Take my mother's foolproof recipe for never-fail bread dough, for instance. She claimed any idiot could make bread, and therefore I should be able to do it.

"First, you haul out the *br-r-reu doonk,"*—Scandinavian slang for the cavernous blue-enamel basin reserved for bread making—"then, make sure your hands are clean. Heat up the potato water."

"Potato water? Where do you buy that?" I venture.

"Ya save the water from last night's spuds. Add a few dabs of lard."

"Ma, how many are 'a few'—I gotta get this written down."

"Well, you know, until it looks right."

Meanwhile, her yeast had been rising in a porridge bowl—the cracked yellow one, mind you, filled with tepid water and "some" sugar. I dared to ask her how much "some" was, to which she replied:

"Oh, just a bit. Sprinkle it into the water, mix it and shake the yeast over top of that. Make sure you leave enough room for the yeast to rise."

"How big a bowl should I use?"

"Good God, girl. Normal size, just like that there old yellow one. It's just right."

"Oh." I felt like Goldilocks.

"Now throw in some salt."

I didn't pursue that one, in case she sent me out to chop a few chips off the salt block in the side pasture.

"Throw in yer yeast mixture and get a good-old-fashioned wooden spoon and start adding flour."

"Oh, you mean one like your paddling spoon, Ma?" Even as a grown woman, I respected that thing. "Where's your measuring cup, Ma?"

Sniff. Nose high in the air, she spat out: "Never owned one. When did you ever see one in this kitchen?"

"Never."

With that, she plunged her old sifter into the flour bin, shaking out powdery flour into the glutinous mess, her arms jiggling right up to her jawbone with impatience. She then discarded the spoon in favour of well-greased hands. She turned the lump of dough onto a floured kneading area—in our case, the corner of the kitchen table—and tested for just the right consistency. I asked what the "right" consistency was.

"Well, it kinda springs back when you squeeze it."

Okay. How could I not know that?

"Just keep doubling over the dough and lean all of your weight on the heel of your hand and knead hard."

That was easy if you were five-foot-eight with the leverage power of a crowbar. I barely made a dent in what she flattened to the tabletop. I discovered years later that she had a secret to power kneading: She'd think of someone she despised and imagine beating the living tar out of them as she pummelled and heaved an enormous lump of dough around. Next, she had me quickly wash out and grease the cursed *doonk,* then plopped the well-beaten dough (seven minutes, exactly, of steady kneading) into the cauldron—er, bowl—to rise under a damp cover.

"How long, Ma?"

This woman did not deal in cups, teaspoons, hours or minutes. She knew only "some," "a little," "for a while," or "a long time."

"Depends on the season, what kind of firewood, how hot the kitchen is, how damp it is outside—stuff like that. Some days, not long; other days, forever."

"So, tell me, how long is 'not long'?"

The aroma and taste of freshly baked bread was well worth the time and effort!

"About the same as it would take me to get out and check for eggs, feed the hens and put out dairy rations."

Like that was going to help me today, when "checking the eggs" meant opening the fridge, and with no bawling Ayrshire cows with engorged udders waiting at the garden gate.

"How hot should the kitchen be?"

"Oh, a three-stick fire, good roaring one. Might want to throw a bit of juice on it."

I hesitated to ask, but I remembered her coaxing a fire at times with kerosene—that would be the "juice." A few punch-downs and the dough was soon ready.

The next session of kneading was not quite as vigorous and was followed by the division into rolls and loaves. Stupid me, I dared to ask her how big the rolls of dough should be. With an exasperated glare, she slashed a wicked-looking butcher knife through a slab of now-pliant dough and held the palm-sized chunk aloft.

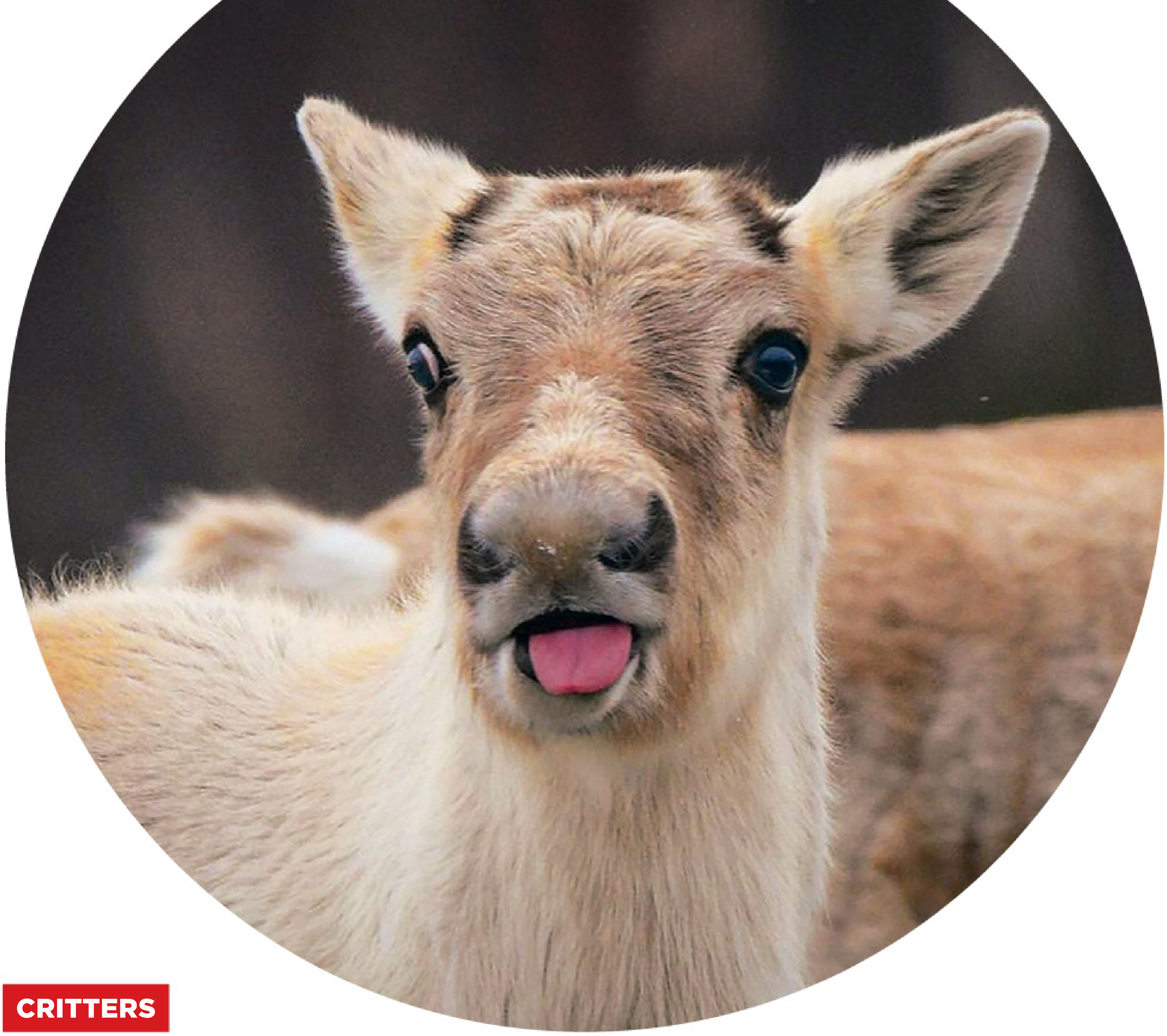
"About this much, wrapped so the folds are all on the bottom. Put it in greased muffin tins, or side by side in a cake pan if you like 'em soft."

"Okay, how much for each loaf?"

Sigh. She wasn't exactly a patient teacher, but she knew that if the art was to be carried on, she'd better give thorough instructions or her culinary skills would go to the grave with her. Another long-suffering sigh. "Enough to half-fill the loaf pan. Round loaves go into those greased tomato-juice cans and pie pans. French sticks lie in two tubes on a cookie sheet."

The bread-making session lasted well into the supper hour, but oh, what an aroma pervaded the house, mingled with odours from a simmering stewpot and a brewing pot of coffee.

I finally mastered her "a little of this and lots of that" method and learned to scale down cooking for a dozen to cooking for three. This laid-back approach was difficult to teach but made for very versatile cooks. You learned to open the fridge door and throw in this, that and the other thing, and ultimately serve up the most tantalizing gourmet delights imaginable. ■



CRITTERS

Salty ’n’ Sweet

In a large herd of salt-seeking woodland caribou, this young, brazen calf sticks out...its tongue!

by Reid Kelly, *Grand Falls-Windsor, N.L.*

This photo was taken on the Bay d’Espoir Highway in Newfoundland and Labrador on January 16, 2021. Every new year, large herds of woodland caribou gather in the barrens on the side of the highway. They go to and fro on the road to get a taste of salt. This young (and brazen) caribou was busy licking road salt with a large group of 20.

My father and I stalked this group for about an hour, watching them swim across a river to get to the road. It was incredible seeing them move so quickly to get to their destination—the highway—just so they could have a taste of salt. Not only were they visible on this beautiful morning, but about 70 others were also milling about and you could see them for miles. They gather in the Gander River area and stay there for months until the warm summer days. You may even see a few others here and there.

I chose to share this photo because woodland caribou are very sparse in Newfoundland but in recent years have been making a comeback. It’s very nice to see lots of happy and healthy caribou. They are beautiful creatures with such personality, and one of my favourite animals to capture.

I know a lot of people who have never seen a woodland caribou in real life. I highly suggest taking a ride down the Bay d’Espoir Highway in the winter months. It will not disappoint. ■

PUPPY POWER!

Coping with the loss of a beloved family pet is never easy, but in this instance, sorrow gave way to inspiration **by Sandy Moore,** *Sault Ste. Marie, Ont.*

In May of 2018, we said goodbye to our 12-year-old black Lab, Molly. After her passing, I said to my husband, "No more dogs...it's just too hard on everyone."

Shortly after that conversation, a friend posted on Facebook that a puppy had been returned to her breeder and asked if anyone would be interested in her.

Not sure if it was our grief or the beautiful face that was staring back at us, but we decided we couldn't say no to her. I remember my husband saying that it was my decision, but I'm quite sure he was hoping I'd say yes! When we picked her up, the breeder said to me, "She will not replace Molly, but she will help with your grief."

What do you do with a four-month-old? It was literally like having a brand-new baby in the house, maybe worse, but it wasn't like we hadn't had a dog before. At the time we brought the puppy—whom we named Chloe—home, our two daughters were out of the house, so that left my husband and me to take this baby under our wings and love her like no other. That was not hard to do—but what was, was keeping up with her! I used to say that if anyone who was thinking of getting a dog asks how we made out with a new puppy at our age, my reply would be, "Get an older dog!" Today, I would encourage them to take on a new puppy!

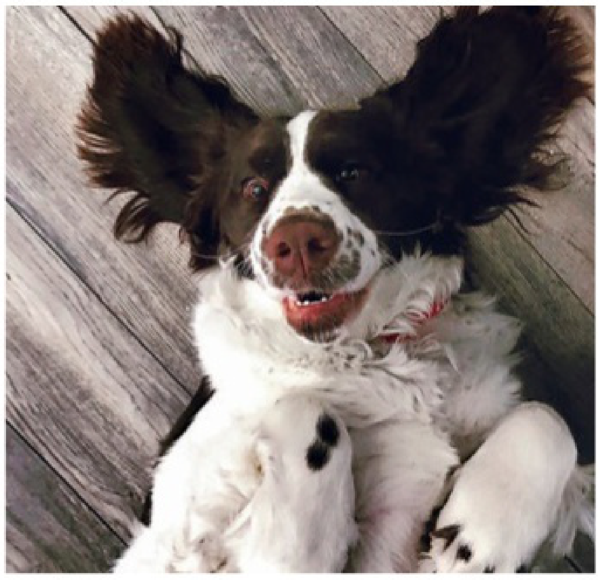
Chloe has been more than we could have expected, but that may have been because we had more time to focus on her and learn about her. One of the things we noticed early on was her different expressions and reactions to things.

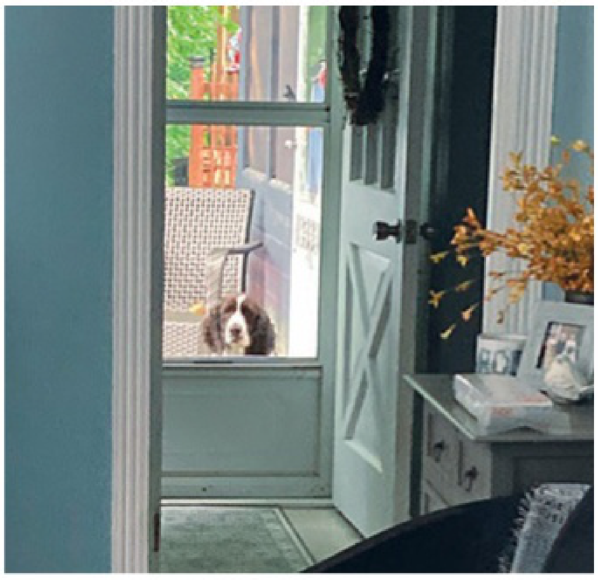
I started taking pictures of her and, by the fall of 2019, my mind was working on different stories based on her photos, but I had yet to write anything. I also had to decide how "busy" I wanted to be with my plan of writing books about Chloe, as well as how I could tell her story in a simple form.

Once I had decided to move forward with the books, I didn't want to be tied to the writing like it was work. I wanted to be able to produce the books on my time, which meant I couldn't commit to the deadlines a publisher would need. In choosing not to go with a publisher, I own the copyright and I manage all the creative/design aspects of

Above: the breeder's photo of Chloe that won Sandy's heart. Left: Chloe as a pup, and, below, all grown up!

BREEDER'S PHOTO: KARMADI ENGLISH SPRINGER SPANIELS





Chloe's Adventures
with
Chloe M. Beans
"Going for a Walk"
By
Sandy Moore
Chloe's Adventures
with
Chloe M. Beans
"Sleeping Puppy"
By
Sandy Moore
Chloe's Adventures
with
Chloe M. Beans
"My Backyard"
By
Sandy Moore

the books. This gives me control of the marketing, as well, but in the end, I just wanted to share Chloe's story with others and enjoy the creation/writing process of the books.

In 2020, I published the first and my favourite book of Chloe's, *Going for a Walk*. Then, *Sleeping Puppy*, followed by *Maggie* (based on our youngest daughter's dog); *My Backyard*; *My Flat Mouse*; and my sixth book, *Top Dogs*. *Top Dogs* was a labour of love, if I can say that, as it features dogs of family and friends, and includes photos of my parents and father-in-law, who are shown with the dogs they each had in their younger days. The book also includes beloved dogs who have crossed the Rainbow Bridge. Sadly, while putting the book together, three of the featured dogs passed away, and another since it was published.

The descriptions under the photos on each page of the books are easy to follow for children who are just starting to read, and they're entertaining for youngsters who can read already. Feedback has been positive.

I had intended, when I started to write, that ten books would be my limit, but our eldest daughter has a new puppy now, our youngest daughter has added another dog to her family, and Chloe is always making new friends. And so there are many stories still to be told—and I have many stories in my mind still to write about Chloe.

I am grateful to everyone who has purchased Chloe's books, to those who've provided photos of her and their dogs for the books, and to all for their feedback. This has encouraged me to continue my journey chronicling Chloe's adventures and life lessons. My plan is to write a longer storybook about her for older children, but I will have someone else illustrate it.

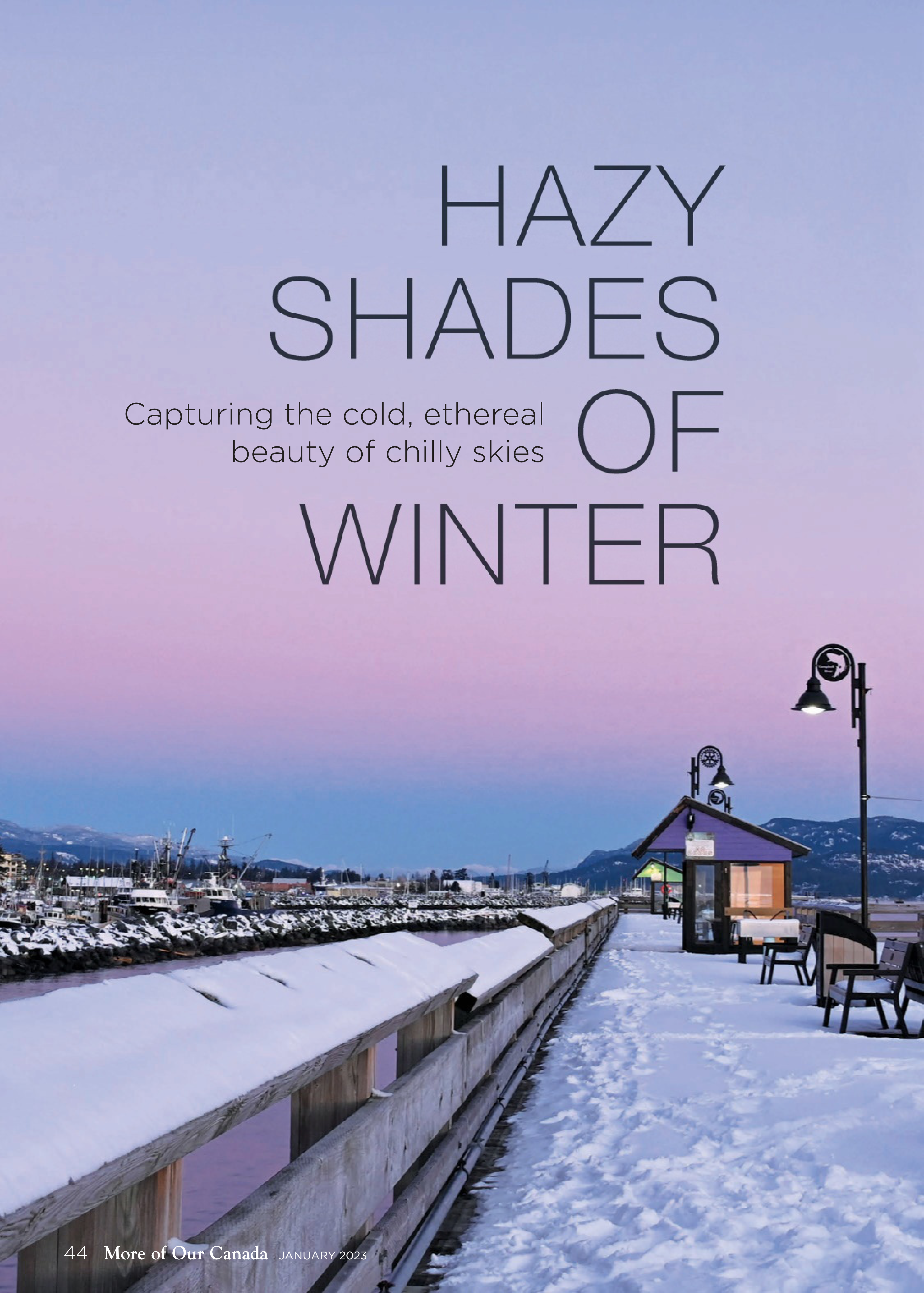
As for Chloe participating in my writing dream, I think she'd tell you, if she could, that she'd do anything for me—but at the same time, she'd remind me that her "Daddy" is her man! She loves any kind of cardboard, Ritz crackers and Cheetos, horses and frozen green beans, has no idea what personal space is about, and has a boyfriend!

We can't imagine life without her. ■

Sandy's books are available on Amazon.

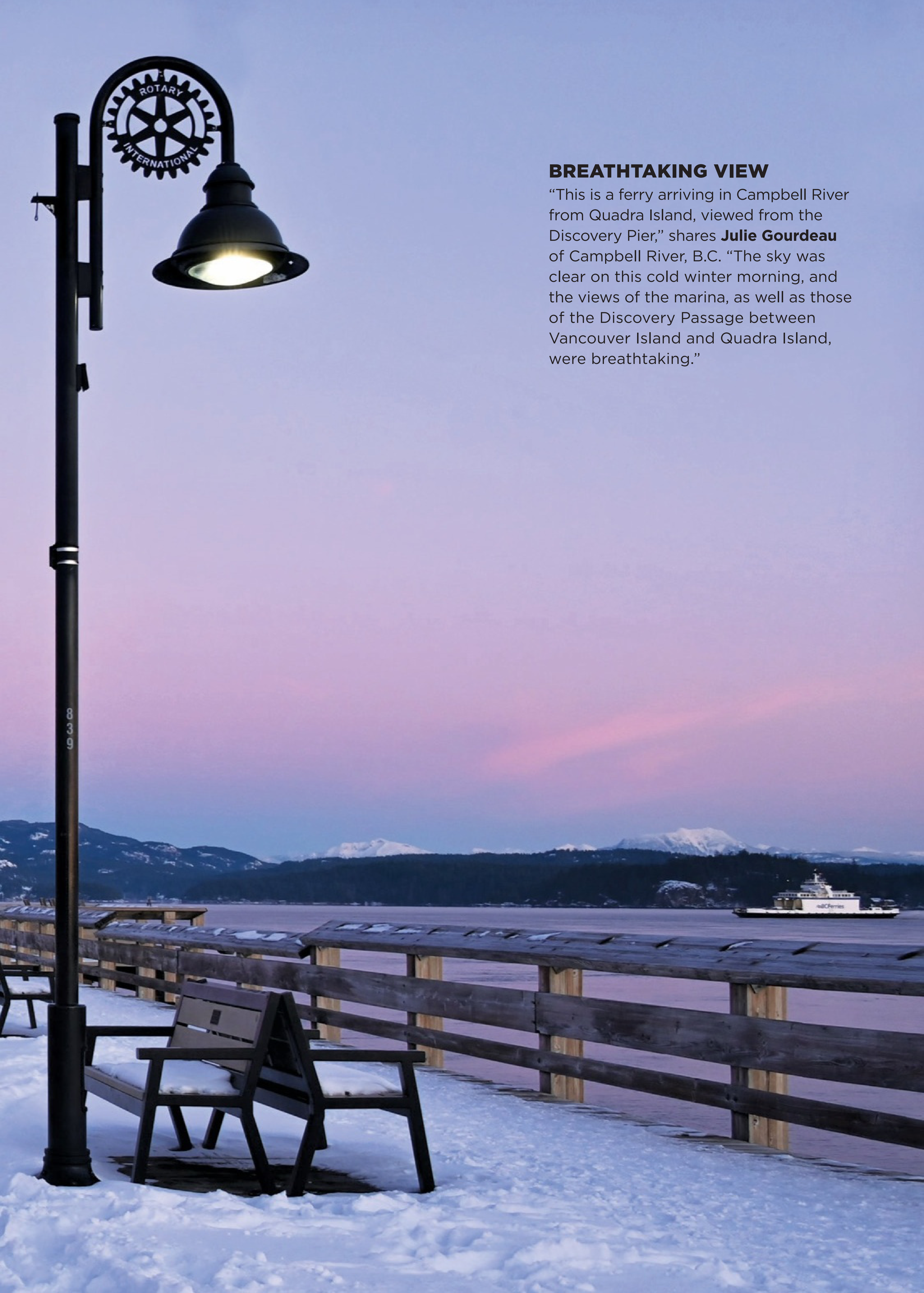
Clockwise from far left: Chloe, contemplating a game of fetch; three covers from Sandy's "Chloe's Adventures" series; Chloe being her quirky self.

PHOTO ILLUSTRATIONS: CLIP2COMIC



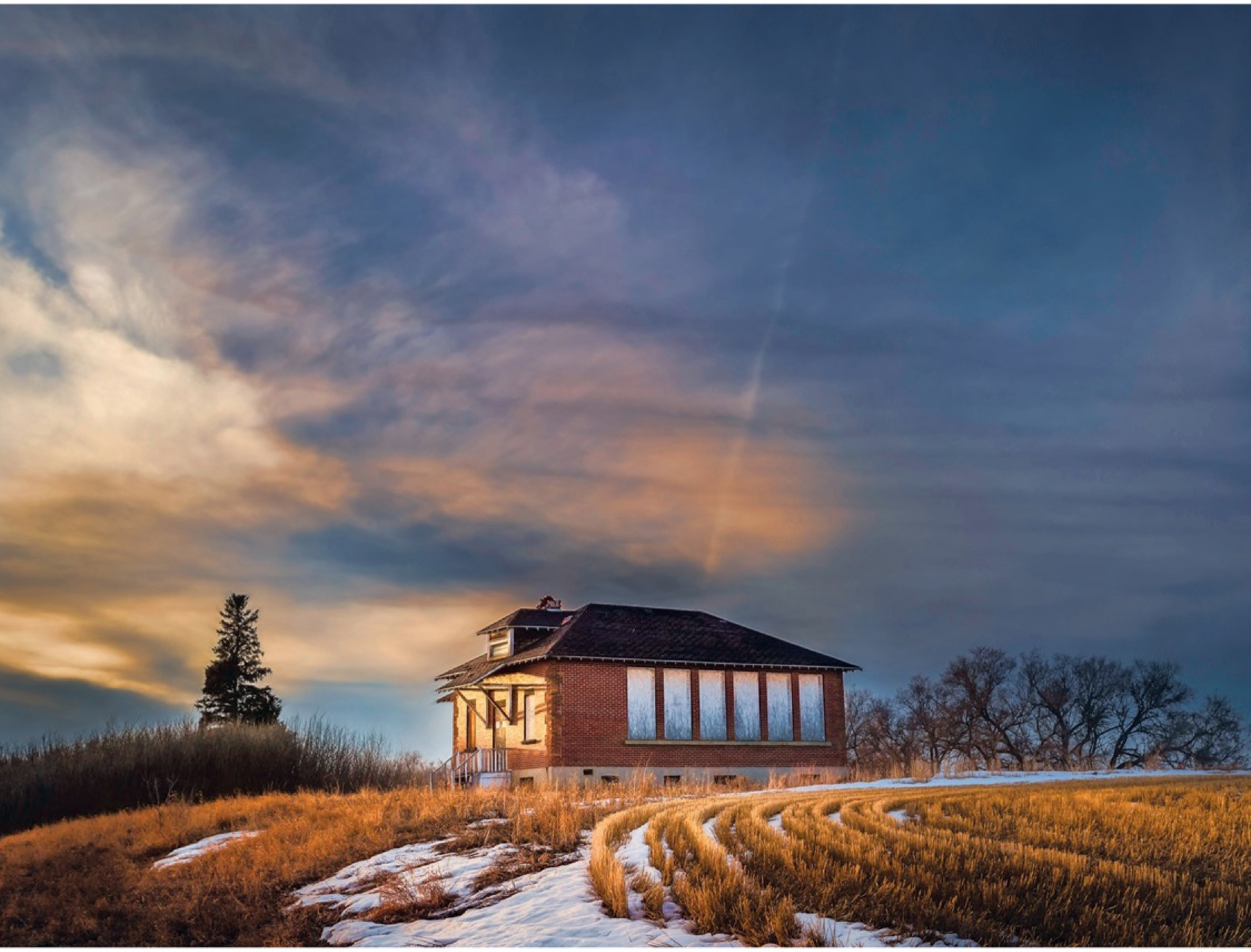
HAZY SHADES OF WINTER

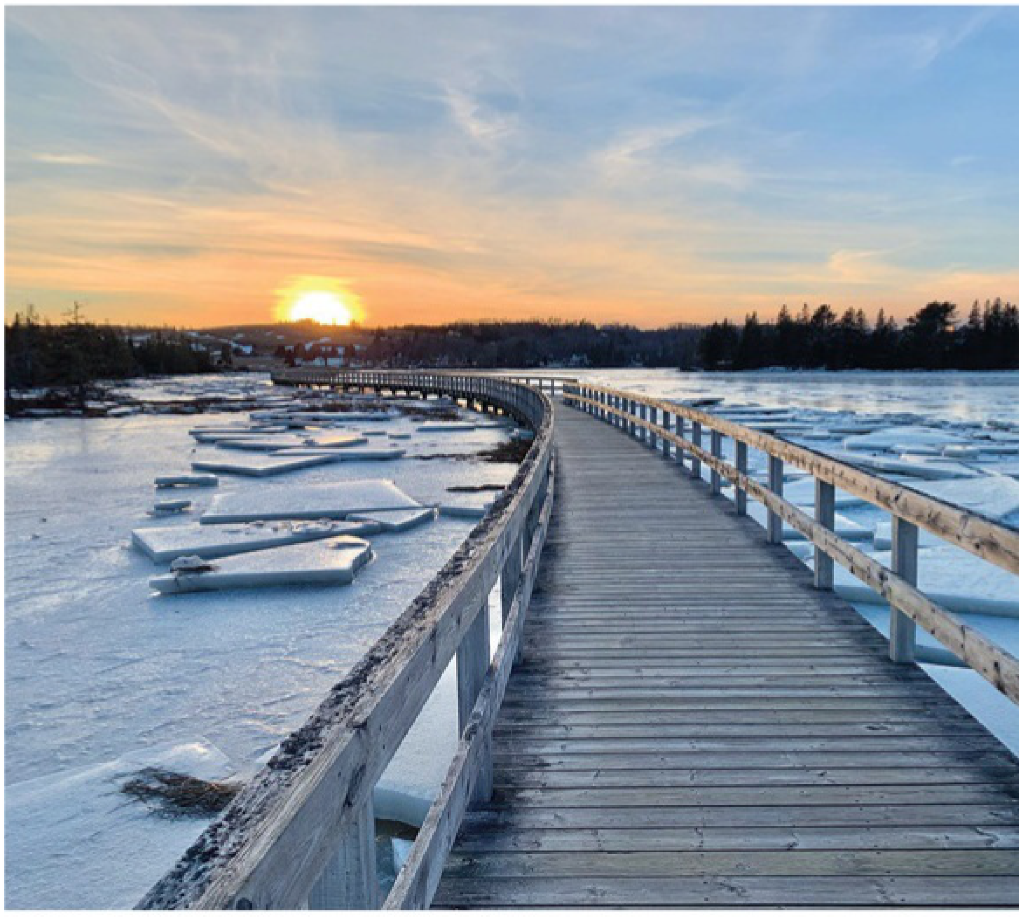
Capturing the cold, ethereal beauty of chilly skies


ROTARY
INTERNATIONAL
839
BC Ferries

BREATHTAKING VIEW

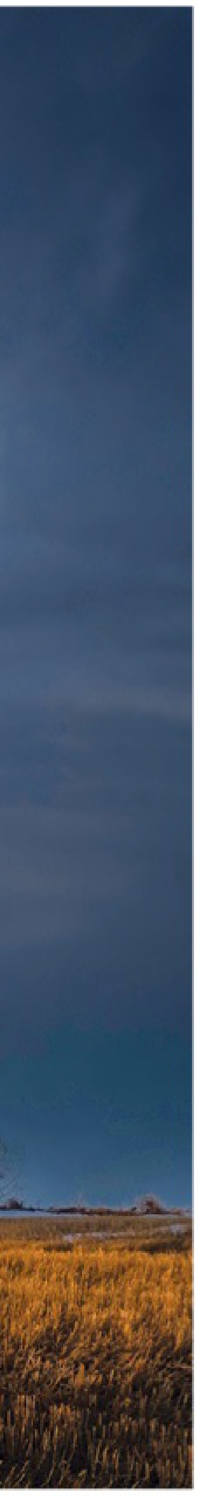
"This is a ferry arriving in Campbell River from Quadra Island, viewed from the Discovery Pier," shares **Julie Gourdeau** of Campbell River, B.C. "The sky was clear on this cold winter morning, and the views of the marina, as well as those of the Discovery Passage between Vancouver Island and Quadra Island, were breathtaking."

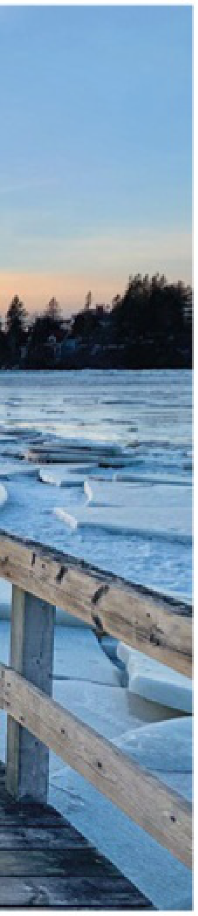


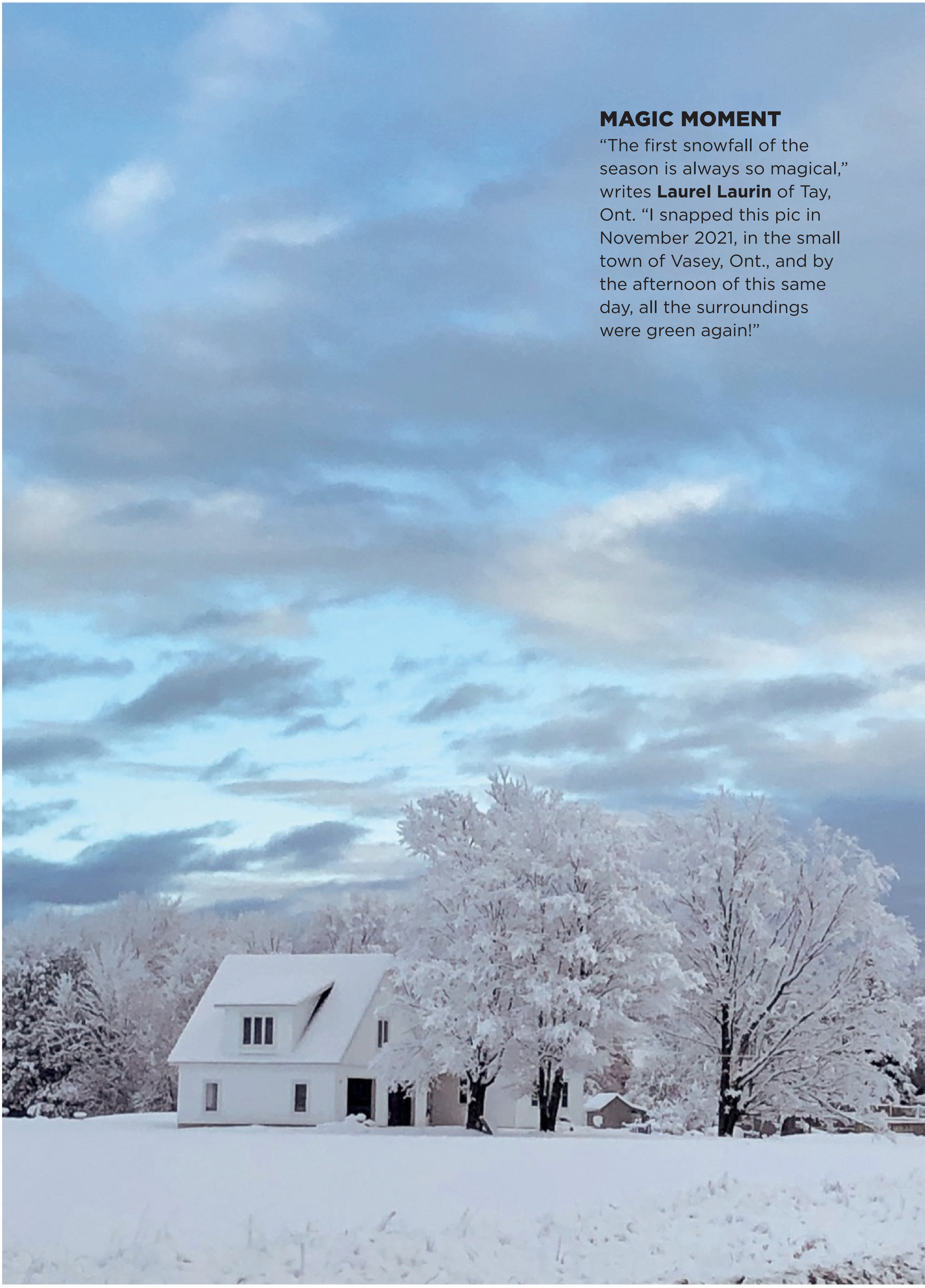


HISTORIC LANDMARKS (above)
“There is so much history in this province, especially with all the old schools,” says **Jackie Gartner** of Lloydminster, Alta. “This is the Brush Hill School, near Vegreville, Alta.”

FAMILY PRIDE
“I snapped this pic at nearby Rissers Beach Provincial Park,” shares **Annette Spindler** of Conquerall Mills, N.S. “I was told that my late grandmother, Ruth Weldon, was involved with the movement to make Rissers Beach a public park. While most people visit during summer, I wanted to capture the beauty it holds even during the coldest months of the year.”

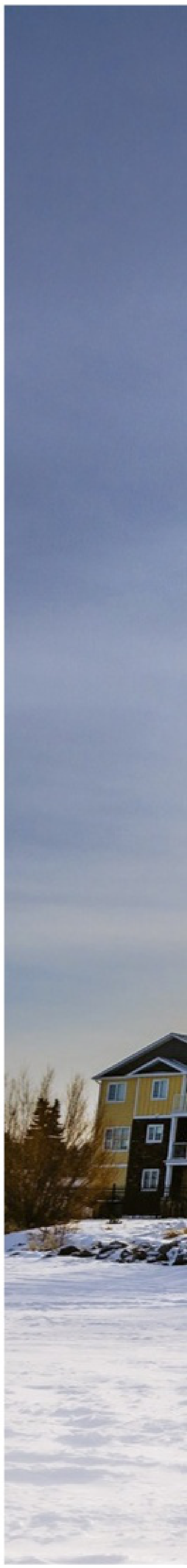


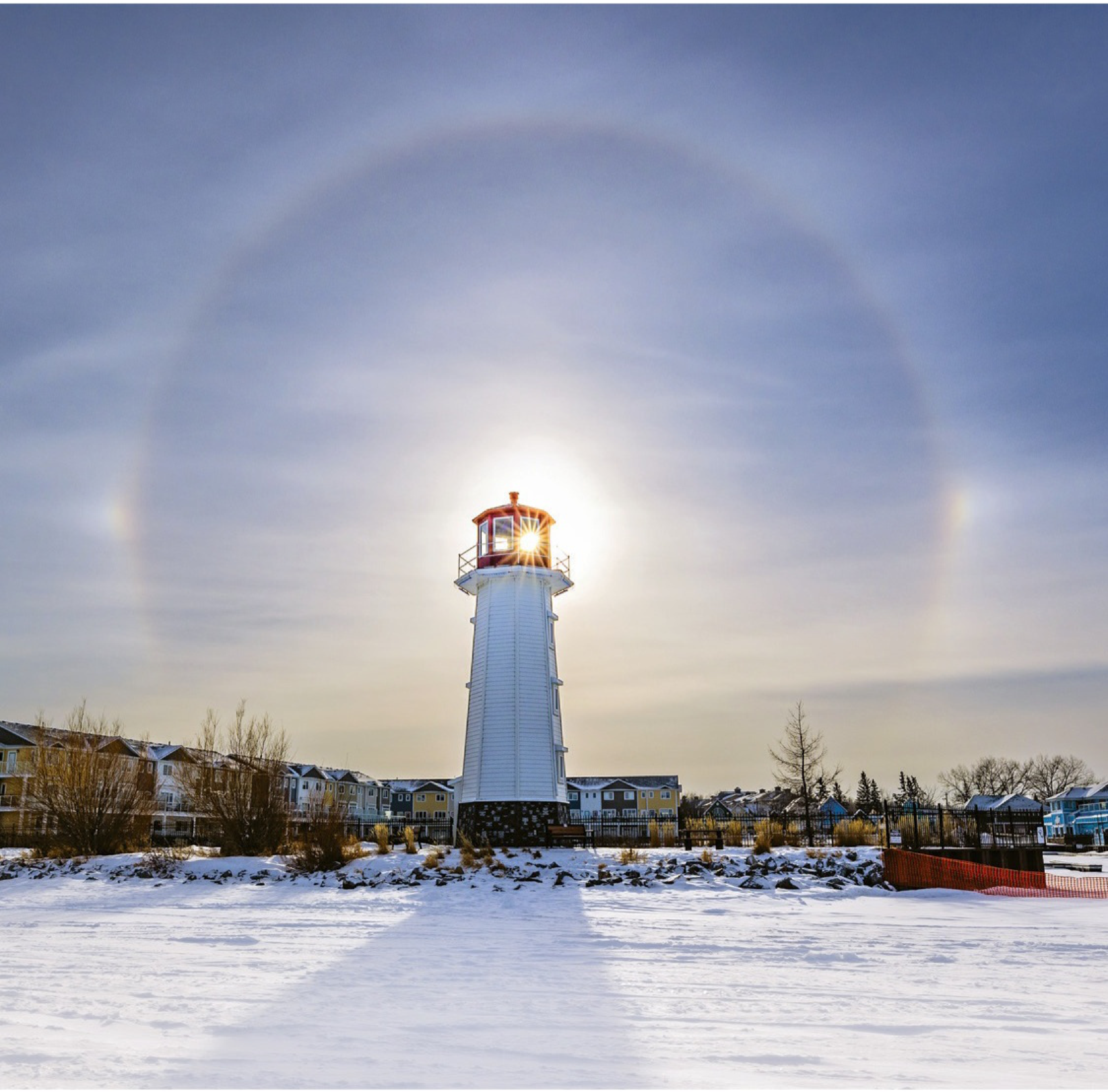




MAGIC MOMENT

"The first snowfall of the season is always so magical," writes **Laurel Laurin** of Tay, Ont. "I snapped this pic in November 2021, in the small town of Vasey, Ont., and by the afternoon of this same day, all the surroundings were green again!"





ICY URBAN SCENE (left)

“This photo captures city life during winter in the North,” says **Jeff Szucsik** of Edmonton. “The city’s winter scenes usually reveal a stark, cold atmosphere. The ice fog, however, gives the city an ethereal beauty much like an impressionistic painting. I took this pic from my balcony at sunrise. It was so cold, I had to use a hair dryer to heat the balcony door just to open it!”

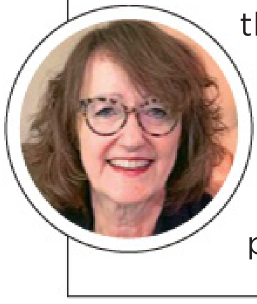
SPOT ON

“It was a bitterly cold, windy winter day in Sylvan Lake, Alta., when I spotted this brilliant sun dog and halo,” writes **Carmen Therriault** of nearby Norglenwold, Alta. “I ventured out onto the frozen lake to capture this shot. With the sun quite low in the sky, everything lined up perfectly to create this beautiful scene.” ■

THE HEALING **POWER OF MUSIC**

A widow finds a way to deal with her grief and embrace joy once again

by Leslie Pitchford, *Winnipeg*



ABOUT THE AUTHOR Leslie started writing in 2019 after retiring from a long career in health care. Widowed the prior year, she found healing through the written word. Leslie discovered that the more she wrote, the deeper was her self-reflection of who she was or could be. In her writing, she has developed an emphasis on what she can share with other widows to give them strength and hope in their journeys. Her other passions include her two young grandsons.

Have you noticed how an ending leads to a beginning? An end of a relationship or a career, or perhaps death. At the time, it is hard to visualize ahead, since there is such intensity in the moment as we deal with closure. My story centres around the death of my husband and a life as I knew it. This occurred before COVID, but the new experiences as a widow came on its heels. Interesting how we measure time pre- and during COVID, as I don't think there is an ending to it yet. However, the silver lining was the self-discovery I experienced during the long stretches of isolation. I moved from the shock of my husband's death to a period of isolation, when I had neither the familiarity nor reassurance of my husband.

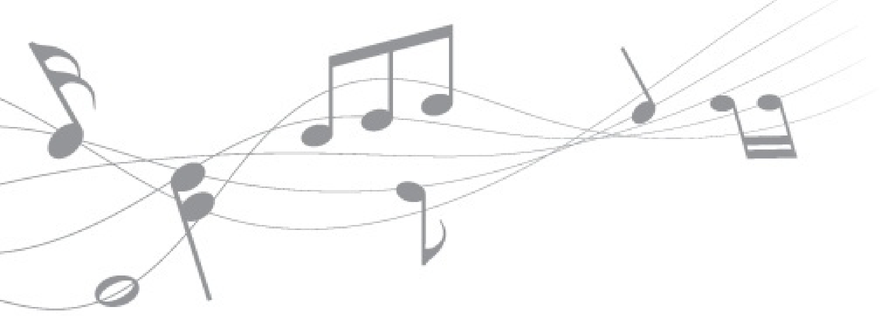
Being a spiritual person, I never doubted my husband's spirit was close by, which led me to a reading with a medium. I didn't disclose any personal details, which made the reading more surreal. I was told by my husband, who spoke through the medium, to look within and understand my heart and what was important to me, my authentic self where I will find my answers. The term "authentic" was used and I learned it is your true nature or beliefs. When we experience extreme emotional triggers or significant life changes, our inner balance of knowing who we are is lost.

To begin, I needed to listen to my inner voice. Have you ever experienced that inner voice some call "conscience?" I was being led to look at how I wanted to live as a widow, but I had to know myself first. This inner voice occurred a lot as I looked at the many things in my home that triggered memories of my husband. One of them was my husband's turntable stereo system. Music had always been important to me, but I had switched to CDs from tapes instead of record albums. I now had a yearning to hear music from the past—achievable only with my albums, which I had saved.

Here is my story about how music soothed my grief and comforted me during COVID. Using the stereo system was my connection to my husband.

As I sat on the floor of my basement looking within the crawl space, I knew I had to deal with the memories stored within. My attention was drawn to the turntable and stereo system, my husband's, which had played countless albums in the past. I remember the great joy listening to the music. This stereo system had been on the shelf, collecting dirt and dust for a long time. Would it play again, come to life with music flowing or bouncing from the speakers? The speakers were another story—encased in a solid wooden frame, so beautiful but no longer functional, as they had deteriorated. Only the frame remained as a reminder of another era. The albums were stored close by, silent and waiting to come back to life. My precious

ILLUSTRATIONS: ISTOCKPHOTO



music came from these albums of memories stretched over a lifetime. I felt the impact of music on my soul and wondered why I had stopped listening to the albums of treasured music. How long had it been since I allowed myself to be encircled in the inspiring tones only a stereo can make?

There was an urge to fill that quiet space around myself, to soothe my grief and stop the tears. These were the tears of grief. How could I move forward when now surrounded by silence? I was alone with my thoughts in the silence of the room, no longer a companion to share this space. My husband had filled the rooms with joy and laughter throughout our lives together. My husband was gone forever, a passing too fast to make any sense. Why would I want to torture myself now by refurbishing his stereo system, which would trigger so many memories because it would bring him closer. There was a pull at my heart, an inner voice saying: Bring music back home. Start to live again and remember the impact of music.

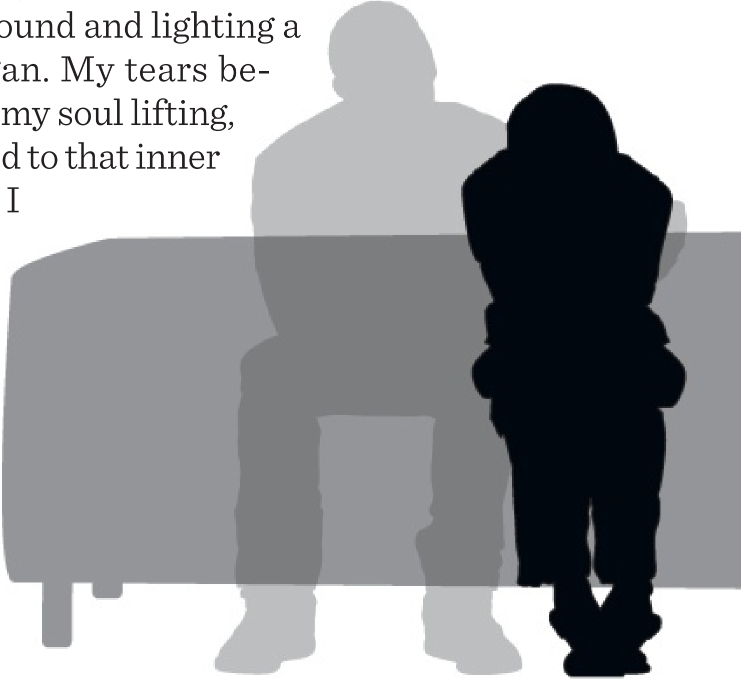
Remembering the past, I recalled the impact of music on my soul. Music reflected my emotions—happiness, melancholy, sadness—with notes and vibrations reaching the heavens.

One day in conversation with a musician, I learned about a small store tucked away specializing in repairing sound systems from the past. My inner voice spoke to me: Be happy, live, use the stereo. I knew the message was from my husband. I went with the stereo to the store, where I found a musty atmosphere surrounded by countless music systems of the past. Going into it felt like I had gone back in time. Looking at all the various types of turntables, replacement parts stacked throughout the store—stacked almost to the ceiling—was a sight I would never forget. What initially I thought was clutter became apparent as organized chaos. Refurbishing that beautiful stereo system and turntable was the wisest decision I could have made; my husband felt closer. A genuine excitement of renewal spread not only from a renewed stereo, but from a renewal of my soul. I felt an excitement I hadn't felt for a long time, and felt my husband smiling from heaven, knowing the music would bring joy into my heart and perhaps lessen my grief. I knew it was him because I felt a presence watching over me.

No longer paralyzed in grief, I took those first steps and started the journey of refurbishing the system and retrieving all the albums, including my husband's. Music became my healer for a broken heart. God had heard my prayers.

The day arrived to set up the stereo and turntable. I had bought new speakers and taken a crash course at the store in how to connect them, making written notes and hoping I would remember what to do when I got home. Coincidentally, I had bought a special unit for the stereo to sit on, with cabinets on either side to house my precious albums. This unit would be in the living room. How perfect can that be, as if it was meant to happen, to all come together and support music once again? The universe worked in synchronicity to make it happen.

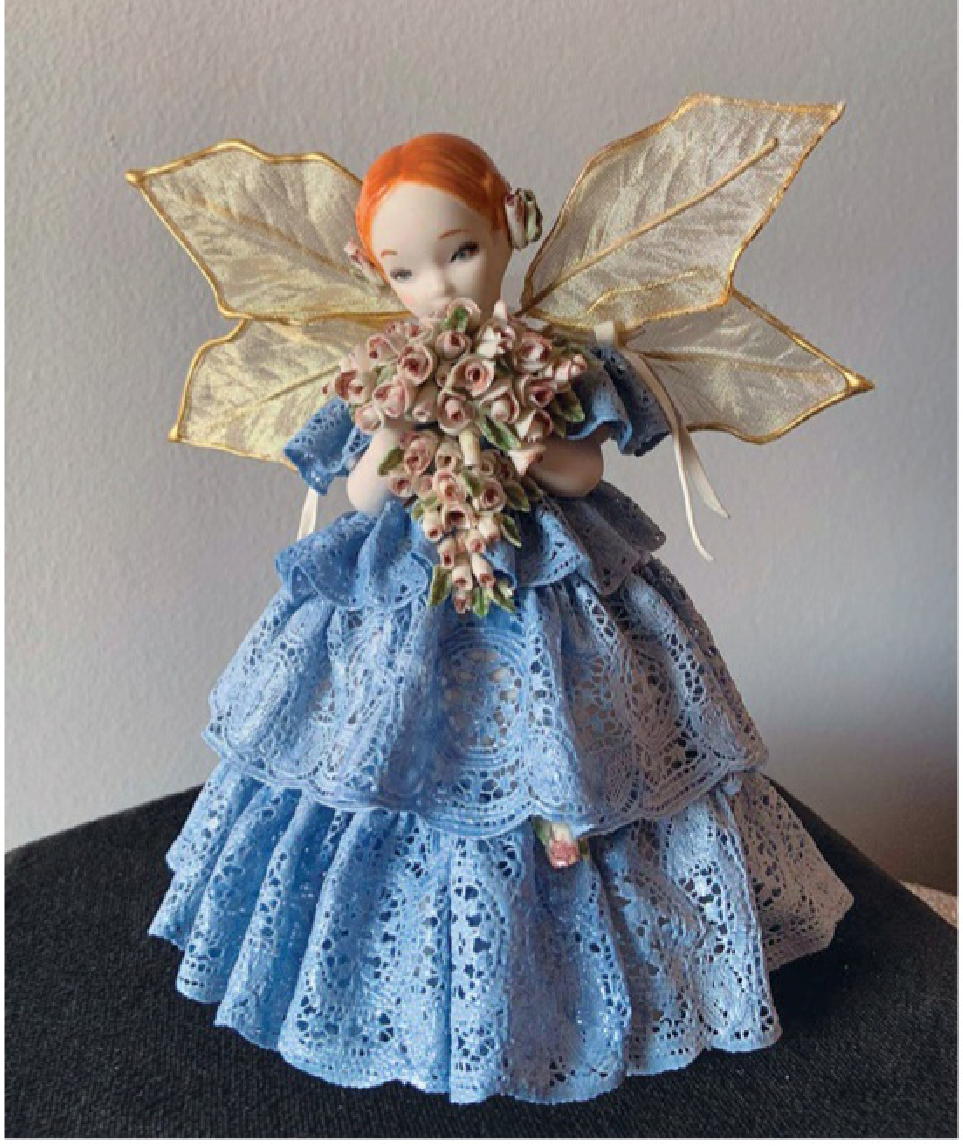
With tears in my eyes and a picture of my husband close by, smiling, I turned the stereo on. Gently placing the needle on the record, adjusting the sound and lighting a candle, the music began. My tears became tears of joy. I felt my soul lifting, so grateful I had listened to that inner voice, the voice of what I needed now. I knew I could move on holding my grief in a gentle way, enwrapped in music instead of my grief enwrapping me in silence. I was at peace, having found myself again—my authentic self. ■

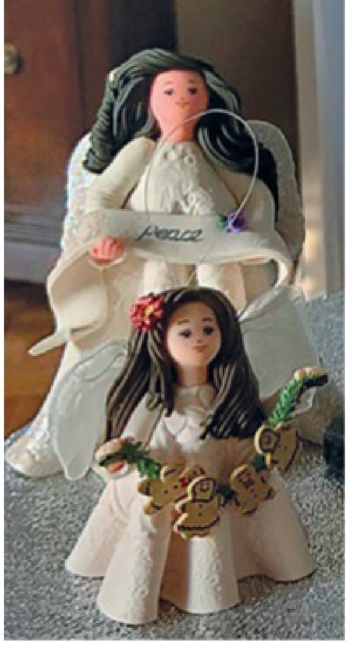


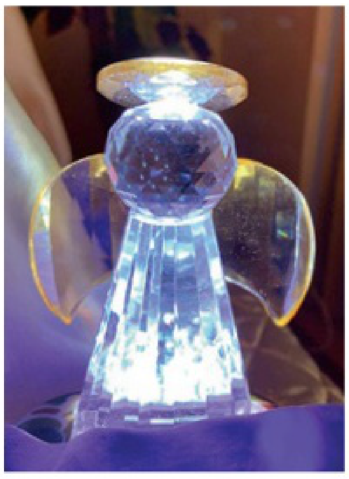
FEELING INSPIRED?

If you are a writing enthusiast looking for an appreciative audience, why not share your fiction, creative non-fiction and poetry with the Our Canada community? Or, if you are a member of a writing group, we'd love to hear from you! Submit your material at **ourcanada.ca** for a chance to be published in a future issue.

Ruth's Christmas angels are warm reminders of family memories, especially those shared over 68 years with her beloved late husband, Vern.







COLLECTORS

Angels Among Us

A box of Christmas figurines unboxed in a new home brings back a lifetime of cherished memories

by Ruth Wright, *Oshawa, Ont.*

In a recent issue of your magazine was an article about collecting carousels. I have a couple of musical ones myself, and I've often thought I should add to my collection. But I got sidetracked.

My own angel collection started many years ago, when our granddaughter Chandra gave her grandfather and me a musical ceramic angel one year for Christmas. It plays "Jesus Loves Me." The next year, Chandra got me hooked on angels when she gave us a handmade angel from a manufacturer in China. Figurines in the "Kneeded Angels" collection range from three to six inches tall.

Over the next 12 years, we were happy to receive one every Christmas from Chandra. One year, she gave us a crystal angel (above, lower-row centre) that sparkled with different colours in the sun. It's beautiful. It sometimes casts a rainbow when the sun hits it on my dining-room windowsill.

Almost three years ago, we moved from our home to an apartment. Soon after, my husband of 68 years and an RCAF veteran, Vern, passed away at the age of 99. He enjoyed singing and was a member of many choirs and singing groups over the years. I like to think he is still singing.

I recently thought now would be a good time to open up the box in my closet with all those angels. After having them out last Christmas, I placed them around my apartment to enjoy all year instead of putting them back in storage. My favourite Kneeded doll (top centre) is a glittering one with a banner saying "Peace"—we all need peace now.

Rosie, a delicate blue doll (top left), was made by my daughter, Marion, quite a few years ago. The doll is not really an angel, but I couldn't resist very carefully putting golden wings on her.

A graceful 1½-foot Christmas angel (opposite page) brightens the living room with fibre-optic lights on her wings and bouquet. She holds many special memories for me of years gone by. She is displayed on a corner table at Christmas, but she stays in storage until the Christmas season arrives. ■

PHOTOS: DON WRIGHT

Spreading Cheer

Creating snow sculptures that make folks smile

by Keith Shelefontiuk, *Castlegar, B.C.*

I love winter. I love the chilly air. I love the cerulean-blue skies. Most of all, I love the snow. Filling the long days of winter with fun makes the season fly by. Several years ago, I began creating snow sculptures. I built an eagle in front of my home, about 50 metres from the road. My creations were all deep in my yard, where only friends and family could appreciate my art. Winter is a time of year that some find difficult, however. Could I make people smile? I decided to sculpt my art bordering the road instead. One of my first creations was *Merry Mouse*; it began my journey of bringing people joy.

Merry Mouse lasted only a few hours before she became a victim of warm weather and salt. After that, I created my figures just a bit further into the yard—so they wouldn't endure salt damage or be buried by a snowplow—but still close enough to the road for people to spot and enjoy.

Someone asked me why I do this, given that the sculptures melt so quickly and are so much work. But if I bring happiness to just one person, it has served its purpose. My creations bring smiles to the faces of kids passing by in school buses and adults returning home from a hard day's work. The honking from cars driving by lets me know I'm bringing cheer to others.

I have had many compliments on my social-media posts, too. One mom wrote that she and her two kids pulled into my yard to view my *Snow-Go-Pogo*. It inspired them to go home and build a snow snake in their own yard. The mom thanked me for getting her children away from their gaming console for an afternoon.

Fellow cross-country skiers have told me that they, too, saw my sculptures on social media, commenting to me about the joy they felt from viewing my art.

In creating my pieces, I sometimes use an existing sculpture to create a new one, as it saves me time and energy. For example, I

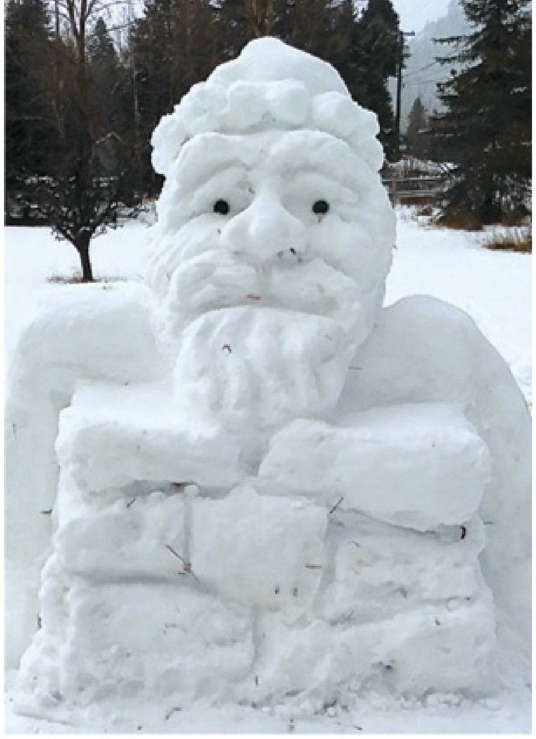
Keith (far right) creates his snow sculptures to both spread joy and honour deserving people.

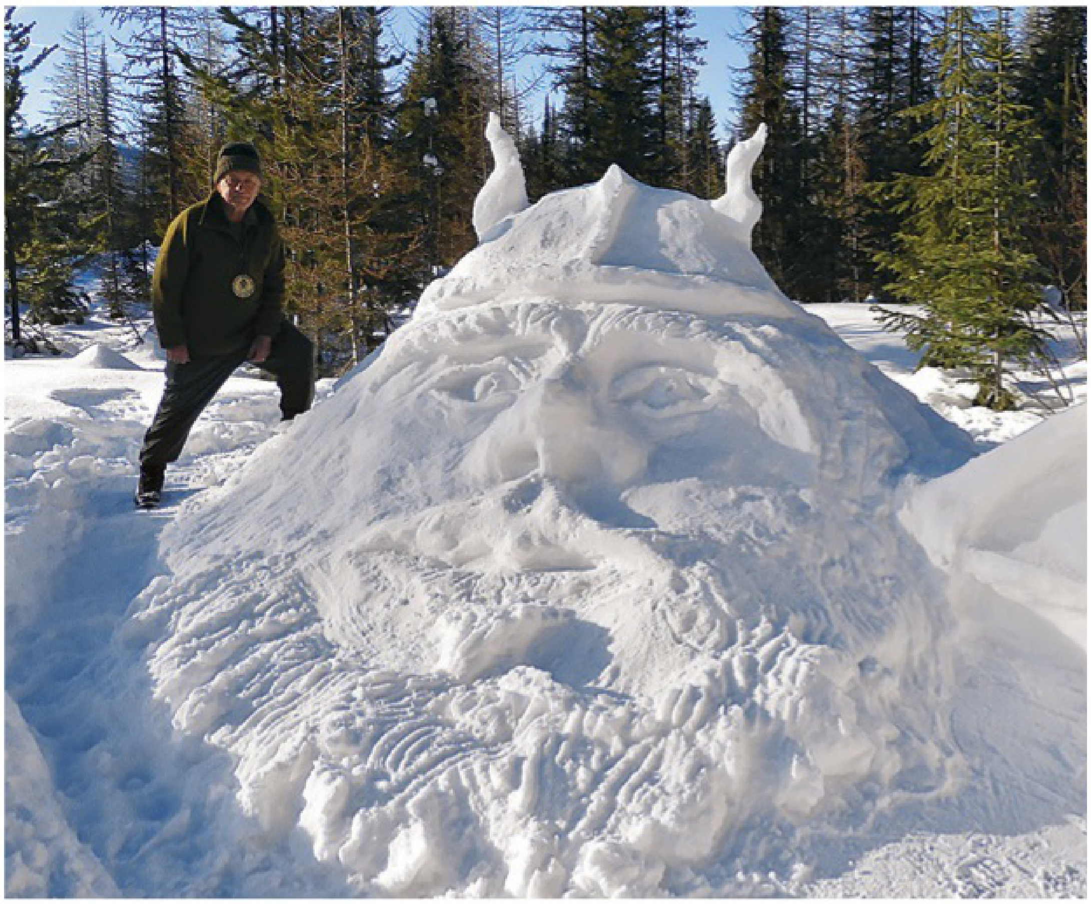
transformed my *Santa Stuck in a Chimney* piece into a Viking.

I am the shelter warden for the Snowberry ski shelter at the Castlegar Nordic Ski Club. While doing my chores, I had a vision of what I wanted to create, and then I went to work. I created a Norseman sculpture and called it *Ironside*. It was a big hit, so I decided to build two more art installations at nearby Mud Lake. I dedicated the hare to our ski-training youth program, Jackrabbits. A troll came next; I created it to honour the participants in the annual Troll Loppet ski marathon.

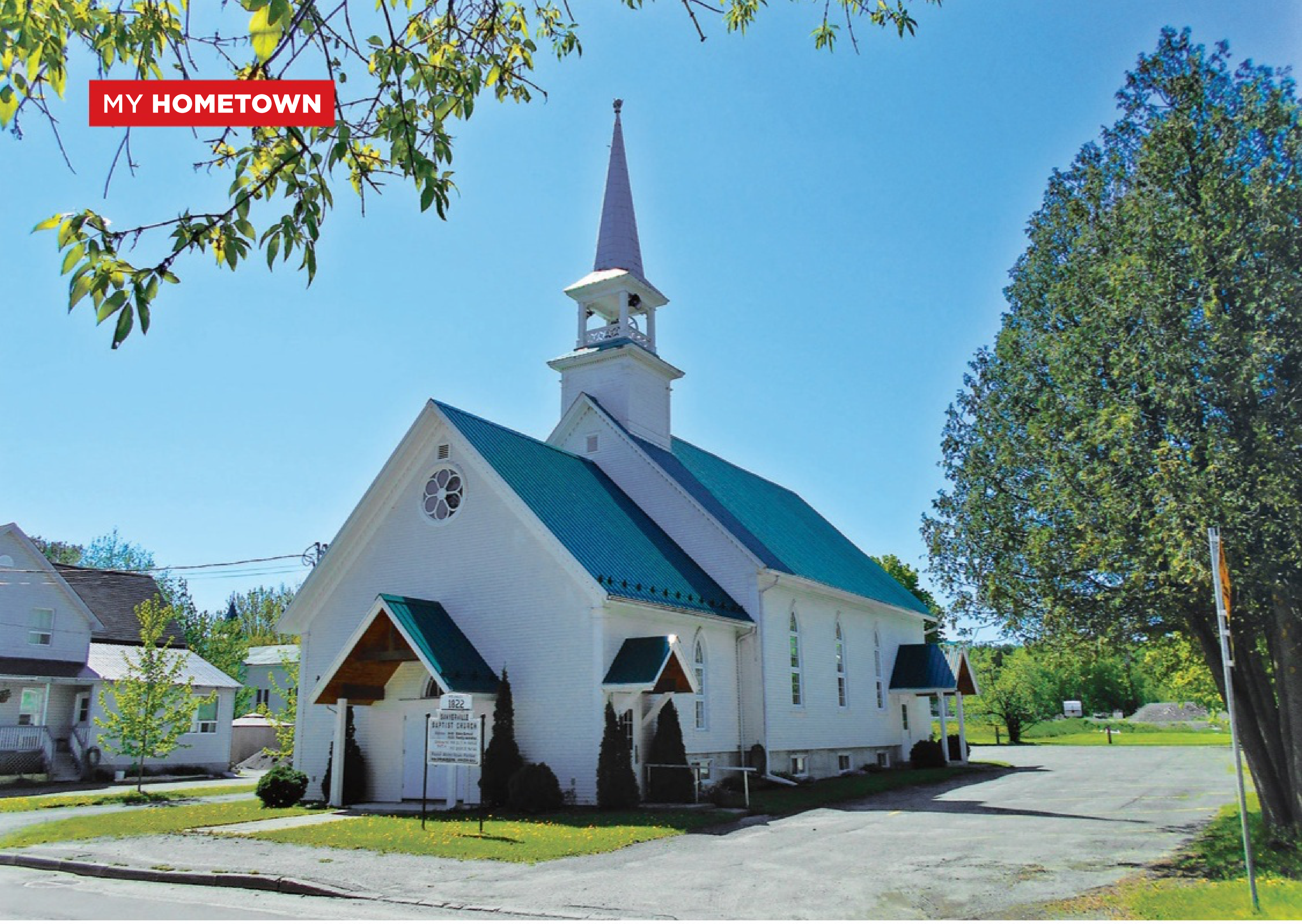
In all, I built ten snow sculptures in the winter of 2021-22. Most times, I dedicate a sculpture to a group of deserving people. My angel sculpture was to honour the first responders during the COVID-19 pandemic, who are our true angels here on Earth, while the dragon was to honour our Winter Olympics athletes.

Embrace this winter and enjoy the snow—but most of all, smile! ■





MY HOMETOWN



Marking a Milestone

Two centuries of service by the Sawyerville Baptist Church is worth celebrating—and building upon!

***by Daniel & Gail Bousquet,** Sawyerville, Que.*

I'm a long-time resident of Sawyerville, as is my wife, Gail. I grew up in Magog, in Quebec's Eastern Townships. In 1967, my family moved to the nearby town of Sawyerville, where we lived on a farm that was almost a quarter of a mile off the main road. We had no means of clearing the driveway in winter, so we were basically snowed in all season. One night, two men from the Sawyerville Baptist Church trekked through the snow in the dark to invite me to Sunday school the following morning. I have been attending the church ever since, and became a member in 1972.

Over time, I have discovered that the church and the town of Sawyerville have a very rich and interesting history. The more that I've learned, the more passionate about the subject I've become. My life here has been one of farm work and being the local jack of all trades, and so I have had the good fortune of getting to know many of the local people, especially our seniors.

I am retired now, but my day-to-day activities often expose

me to something new, especially during the several months that I spent as a member of the 200th church-anniversary planning committee. I became truly immersed in our community's fascinating shared journey.

The Early Years

The first settlers to arrive in the Sawyerville area came through the woods from Canaan, Vermont. Captain Josiah Sawyer, after whom the town is named, built his first log cabin in Sawyerville in 1794. The first preaching services were held in 1805, and the Eaton Baptist Church was organized on December 15, 1822, with a membership of 13.

In 1833, the church voted to make Edward Mitchell pastor. Reverend Mitchell, born in Martinique, was the first Black graduate of Dartmouth College, in New Hampshire. When he moved to Canada, he was the country's first resident of African heritage to have earned a college degree and the first Black ordained minister to serve a chiefly white congregation in Canada.

The church's longest-serving pastor, Rev. Archibald Gillies, arrived from Montreal on December 30, 1841, after a two-day journey by canoe and stagecoach. It's been said that he preached 4,200 sermons in his 38-year ministry.

By 1853, the schoolhouse was still being used as the meeting place for services, but it was felt that a more suitable house of worship was needed. The first church building was later erected at Grove Hill, near the Gillies residence. By the fall of 1888, the congregation decided that a more central site was required, so a lot was purchased in town for $150. At first, the plan was to move the original church to Sawyerville, but eventually the decision was made to build anew. The new church—erected at a cost of $2,465 and opened on October 7, 1889—is still in use today.

The current pastor, Michel Houle, began in the spring of 2008. In 2010, the church held its first French service; this has become a regular Sunday morning worship ceremony, with an English service following. Most Sundays during warmer months, there are several Harleys in the church parking lot, as the Maranatha club—a group of Christian motorcyclists—attend services.

As with any old building, repairs became necessary, so an extensive renovation project was begun in the summer of 2012; work continued for eight months. The entire building was raised and a new foundation, as well as a larger front entrance, office space, new bathrooms and a heating system, were installed.

In 2022, the committee and congregation decided to have a weekend-long celebration commemorating the church's 200th anniversary. The event, held on Labour Day weekend, featured musical performances, artists and displays, as well as presentations by missionaries, a banquet and bus tours of historical sites in the Sawyerville area. A special bilingual church service with a remarkable guest speaker was held Sunday morning.

Sawyerville is a small, close-knit community, of which the Baptist church has been a proud part for 200 years. With the grace of God, it will continue to be a light to the community for years to come. ■

Clockwise from top left: Sawyerville Baptist Church today; Daniel at his historical display; Gail beside the church's new sign and banner; "All aboard!" for a bus tour of the area.

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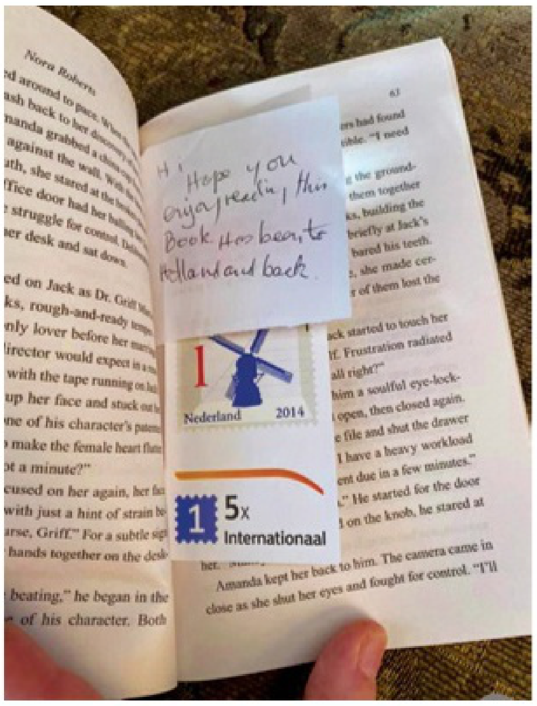


Hi, Hope you enjoy reading this Book Has been to Holland and back

Have Book, Will Travel

A chance find at a second-hand book shop turns into a pay-it-forward venture of global goodwill

by Mary Anne Harrison, *Arnprior, Ont.*

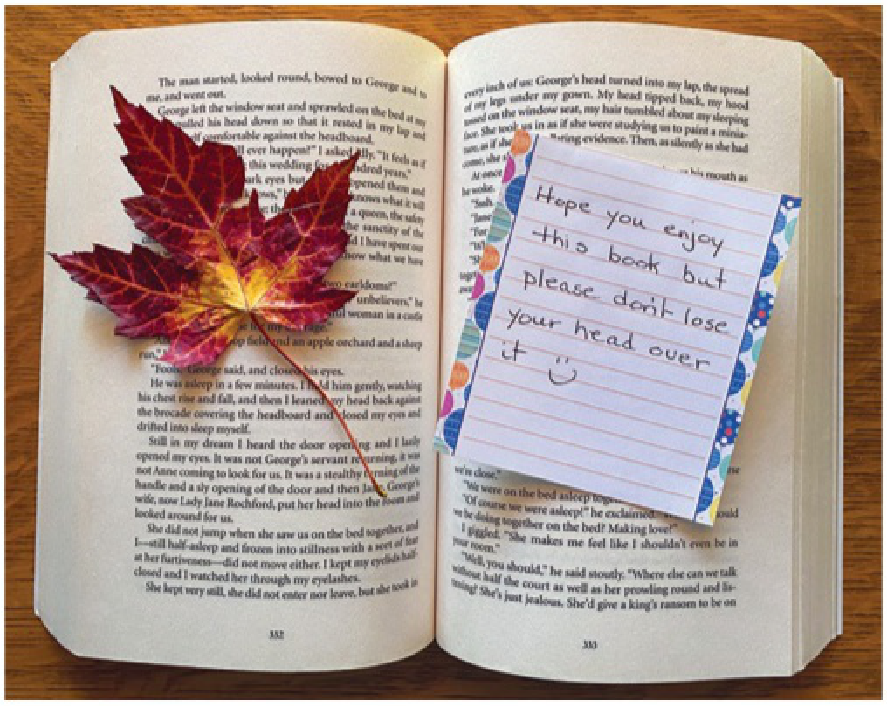
Many years ago, while my husband, David, and I were on vacation in Prince Edward County, Ont., I had just finished my summer read and was scrambling for another to throw in my beach bag. Being rather frugal, I decided to check out the book selection at the local charity shop. While perusing the books, I came across a novel that called out to me. I picked it up, looked at the cover, read the synopsis and thought: Yep, that's a quick, easy read for the beach.

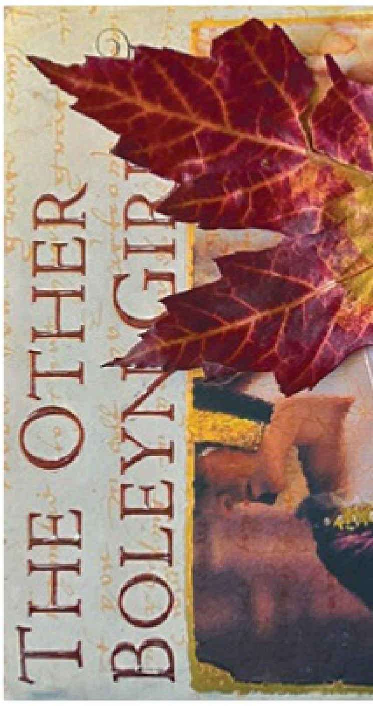
But when I started leafing through it, out popped this note: "Hi, hope you enjoy reading this book. [It] has been to Holland and back." After reading the note, I felt an instant connection to the previous owner and bought the well-travelled item. It had been printed in England, travelled to Holland with, I presume, one of its purchasers, and then back to England and an Oxfam charity shop, where it was sold for two pounds. From there, the book—and its enclosed note—made its way across the Atlantic Ocean and ended up in Ontario, three hours away from my home in a second-hand shop in Picton. I read the book and donated it to another charity shop in the lovely little town we call home, Arnprior.

I am still hopeful that it is out there, making the rounds from one reader to the next. Maybe other readers started adding their own notes, too. And perhaps that book contains even more notes than pages at this point.

This little treasure reminded me of another book, which I picked up while travelling through the Isle of Skye in Scotland on a trip my husband and I took in May of 2016. We had stopped at a vintage store that sold all manner of lovely things. Of course, I was drawn to the books, as always. I came across a teeny, tiny leather-bound prayer book. The pages were thin and dog-eared, the leather cover well-worn, the pages well-thumbed.

Armstrong Little Lending Library
Take a book or leave a book


Hope you enjoy this book but please don't lose your head over it :)



From far left: The note Mary Anne found in a second-hand book that started it all; the prayer book both she and her mother carried on their wedding days; the local book exchange where Mary Anne left her note in the novel *The Other Boleyn Girl*; that very note and book, pre-gifting.

Tucked inside the book was a little spray of dried heather. I decided there and then that I had to buy it. In my mind, it was a bride's prayer book and she had slipped in a posy from her bridal bouquet for safekeeping. When I asked the owner how much she wanted for the book, she said, "Not a thing; a religious item should never be sold."

I treasure that book to this day, and it is one gifted book I could never part with. The other reason for loving this wee prayer book is the fact that my mother carried a white prayer book that my dad had given her on the day of their wedding. She carried that book with her, in lieu of a bouquet, up to the altar when they were married. I carried the same prayer book, with a small spray of flowers on top, when I married David.

ONE GOOD TURN...

While thinking about the owner of my used book from the charity shop and her note, right there and then I decided I would do the same. All my books would be passed along with a little note tucked inside, or maybe even with a colourful maple leaf like that little sprig of heather.

So far, I've left books on buses, in airports, on trains, in bathrooms, bars, restaurants and hotels, on lounge chairs by resort pools, in waiting rooms and at rinks, on park benches and tucked in the little lending libraries scattered around my hometown and other towns in the area. The possibilities are endless.

My notes are short and sweet, and I always wish the new owner an enjoyable read. My hope is that these readers, too, will start the tradition of including notes when they pass along their own well-loved, well-read books. I've never signed my name to my notes, but maybe I'll consider including my first name with my next donation.

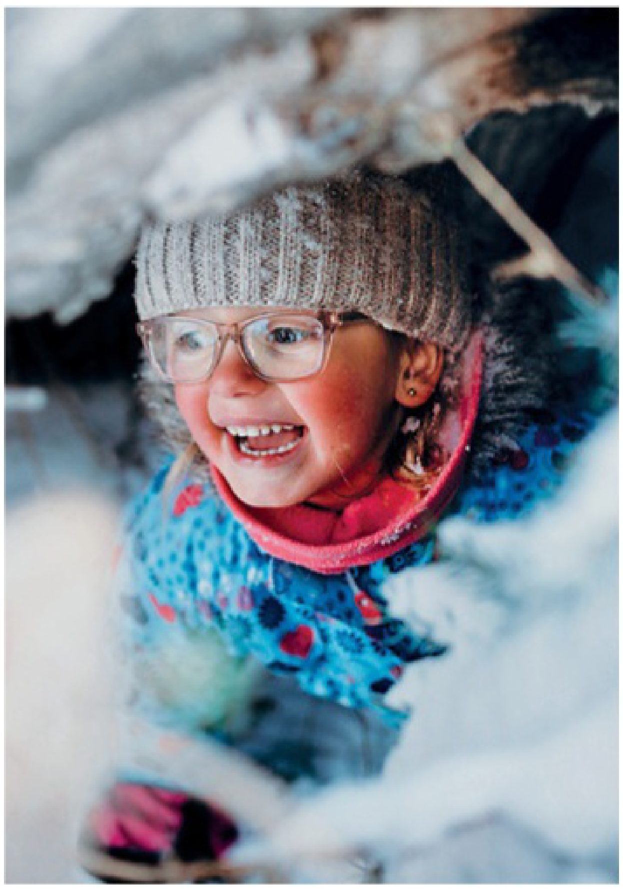
I've only once given a review of a book that I donated. That was for *The Pillars of the Earth,* by Ken Follett: "Five stars. My favourite book of all time." But normally, I try not to influence the reader and let them decide if the book was good—so the less I say, the better.

Sometimes my notes even include a word of "warning" to the reader, especially a recent book I sent on its way, *The Other Boleyn Girl,* by Philippa Gregory. "Hope you enjoy this book, but please don't lose your head over it."

Thankfully, both my husband and I are avid readers, so we will never run out of books to donate or notes to write.

I'd love to know where all my books have been and where they will go. Who knows, maybe someday one of my own notes will make its way back to me, because I have been known to rebuy books and read them again. Even better would be if I came across one of your notes tucked in a book.

Fingers crossed! ■



WONDERFUL **WINTERTIME**

Smiles abound in the great outdoors!

(Clockwise from top)

TIME OUT "While visiting our grandkids, my husband and I and took them out for a walk in the woods behind their house," writes **Sally Beard** of Tillsonburg, Ont. "We came across a clearing with a frozen pond. The kids had fun sliding on the ice but when Malachi got tired and wanted to rest, he backed up and lay down in the reeds!"

GRINS AND GIGGLES **Brittney Srigley** of Melfort, Sask., shares this adorable pic of her daughter, Mila, that she snapped in the winter of 2020.

UNBRIDLED JOY "This is my son, Jeremy, and his son, Jasper, enjoying some winter fun," says **Mary Ash** of Orleans, Ont. "They're lucky to have a slope right outside their door and take advantage of it often. Jeremy's friend Matthew snapped the pic; I love the uninhibited, natural expressions of joy on both their faces." ■

GREENMARK
BUILDERS

Merry Wake-up Call!

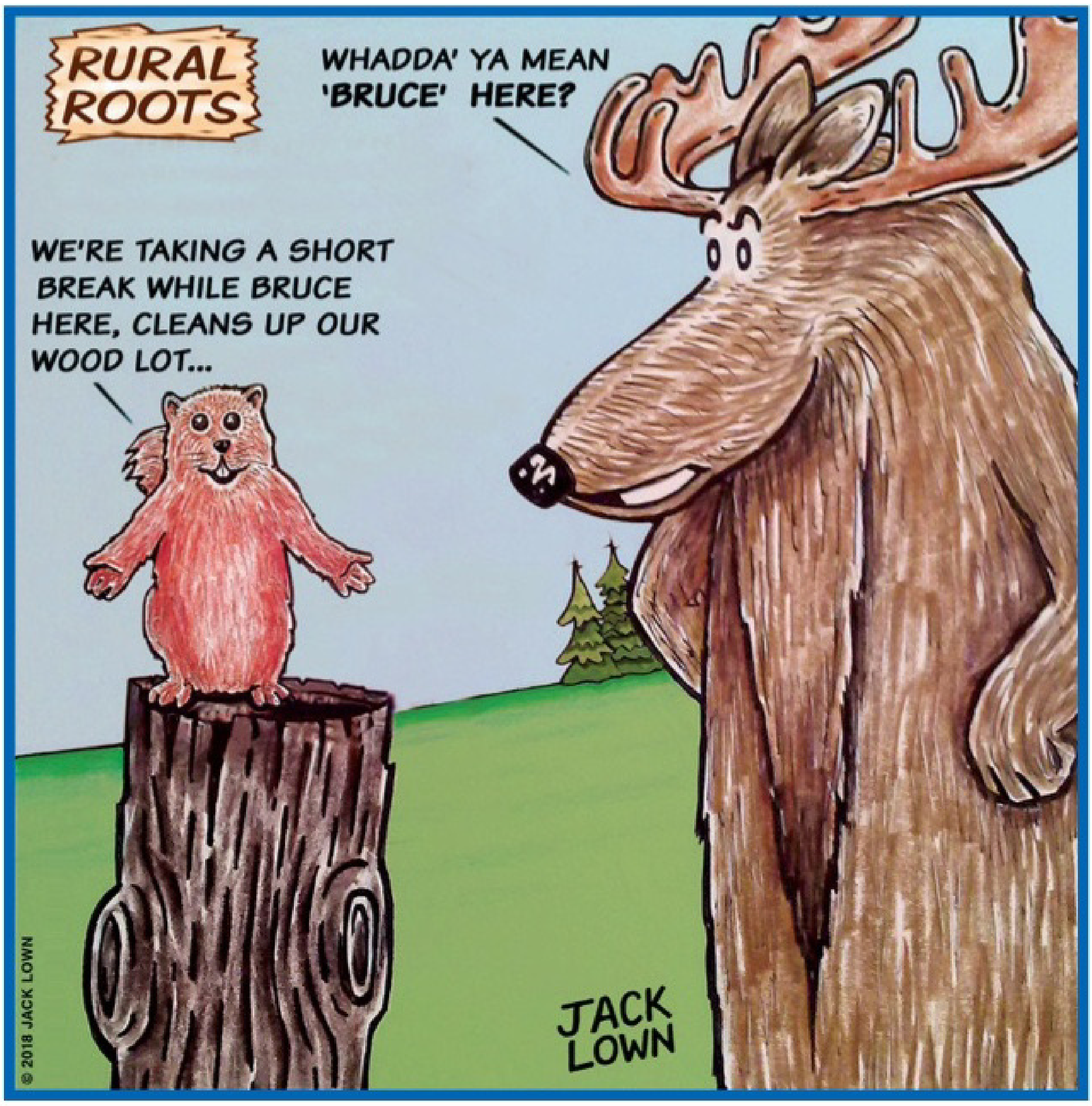
Over the Christmas holidays in 2021, I spent some time with my sister and brother-in-law at their cottage way up north, isolating with family. We were all vaccinated, except for little Chad—what a sweet boy, a year old and always laughing! In this photo (above), Chad seems to be laughing at how funny Granny and Grandpa look first thing in the morning! But no one ever looks great before breakfast! What a fun time, and a beautiful memory.

“Aunt Heidi” Sanita,
Pickering, Ont.

What’s in a Name?

The chairman was speeding through the opening remarks and asking for approval of the minutes of the last meeting, but Fran stopped him. “I see none of you read this,” she said. “My name is spelled wrong.” Awake now, we scrutinized the page and the chairman said, “Thank you for being Frank.”

Janet Beaubien, *Saskatoon*


RURAL ROOTS
WHADDA' YA MEAN 'BRUCE' HERE?
WE'RE TAKING A SHORT BREAK WHILE BRUCE HERE, CLEANS UP OUR WOOD LOT...
JACK LOWN
© 2018 JACK LOWN

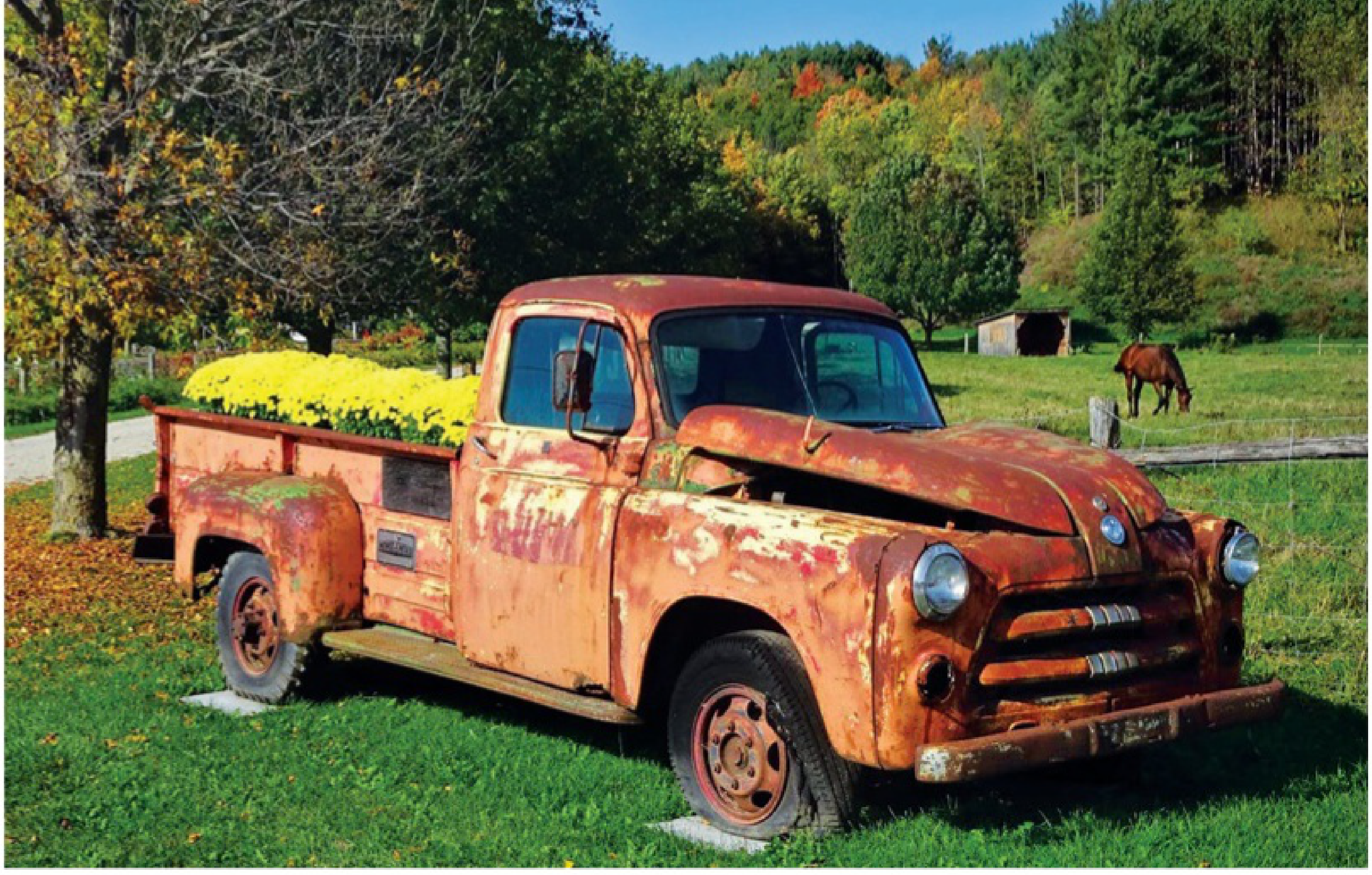
The Cat’s Meow

A few summers ago, my hiking friends and I decided to go to Elliot Lake, Ont., for the weekend to camp and enjoy the deer trails we heard were nice. One early morning, we drove to a trail where visitors parked at a nearby boat launch, and we happened to notice a young couple with a small child drive away as we arrived. My friends decided they would use the bathroom first, so I waited at the beginning of the trail. Standing there quietly by myself, I thought I heard a cat meowing and meowing, as if in distress. Looking into the nearby bushes, I did not see an animal of any kind. When my friends joined me, I told them about the cat I had heard; sure enough, the meowing started up again and they heard it, too.

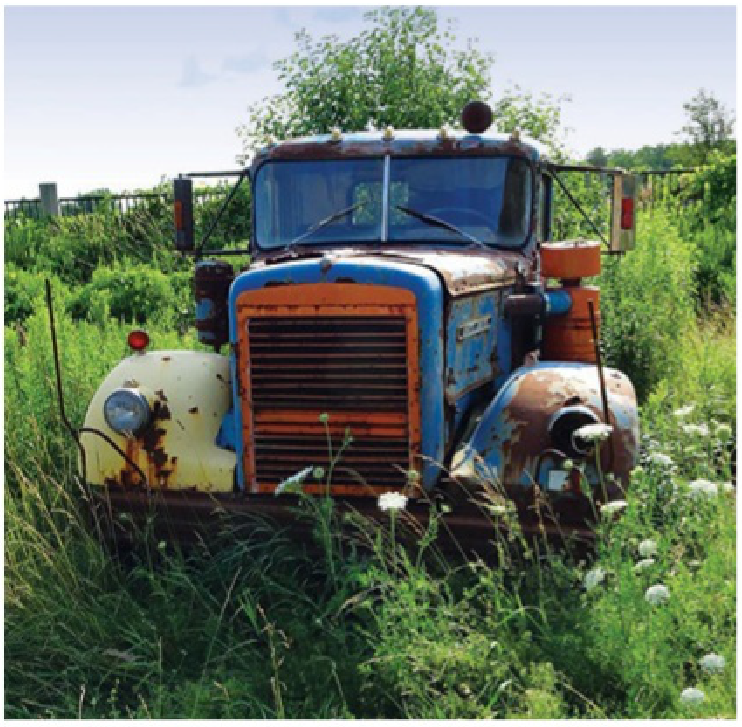
Worried that the young couple who had just left might have lost their cat, we kept looking as we walked forward. As the sound got closer, a partridge came into sight, acting funny: It would jump right in front of us, walk ahead a few paces and stop abruptly; then, we’d hear that meowing sound. It did this repeatedly: jump in front, wait for us to follow, “meow” and then move forward.

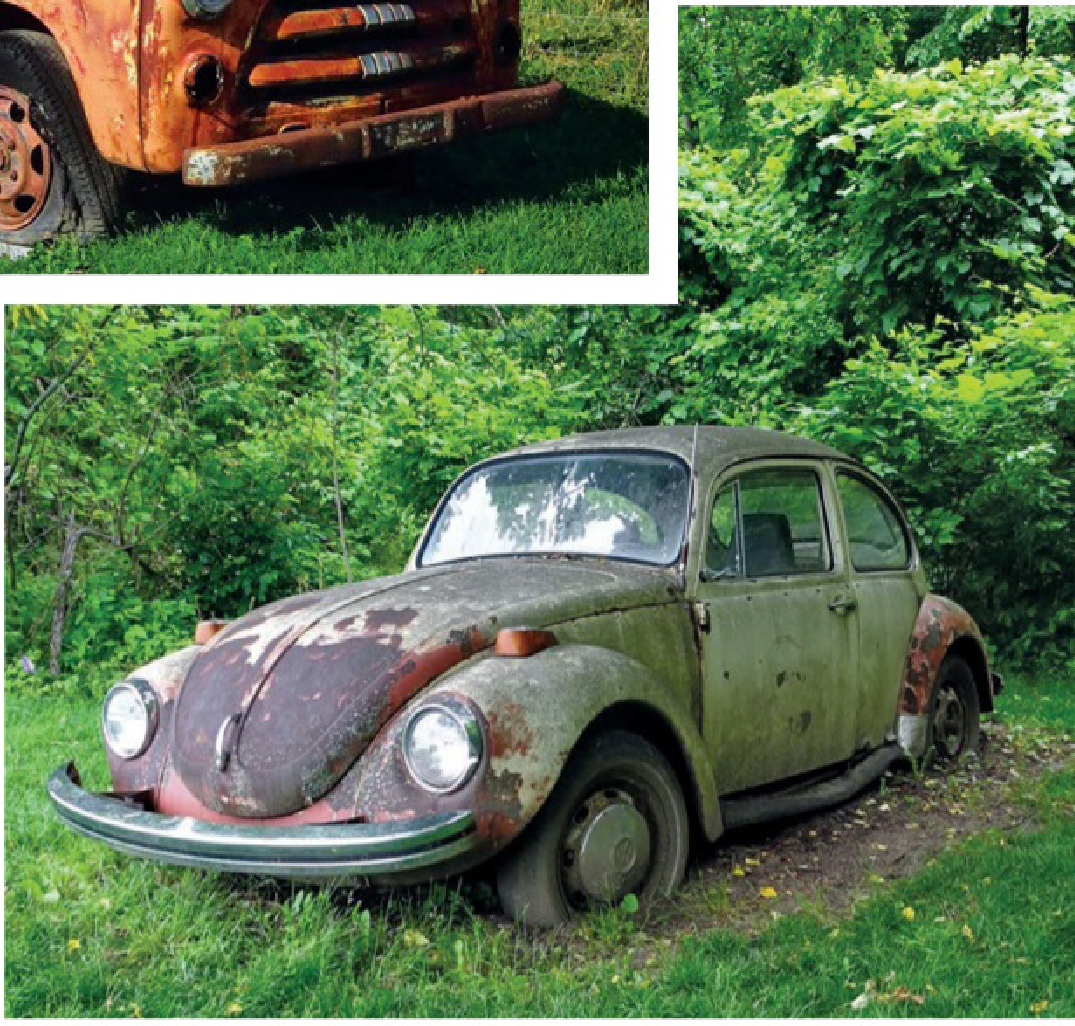
A partridge meowing? We all come from hunting families and this was unbelievable to see—and hear! I decided to take a video but realized I had left my camera in the vehicle, so I ran back to get it. When I returned, the partridge had left. We think possibly it had young in the area and was luring us away, then it flew off. We have never encountered another meowing partridge since!

Linda Derkacz,
Capreol, Ont.



Marianne loves to drive along rural routes and backroads in search of hidden gems.





WHEELS

Road Relics

Discoveries made along routes less travelled **by Marianne Detmar,** *Brantford, Ont.*

I always enjoy taking a fair-weather country drive, because you just never know what you'll find along all the scenic rural routes and off-the-beaten-path backroads that crisscross my region of Ontario.

Last summer, I discovered some rather unique old vehicles that were no longer in use but still beautiful in their own way. Oh, the stories these road relics would tell if they could, I'm sure!

I came across the orange pickup truck, which had apparently embarked upon a new career as a flower box, outside of Creemore near Collingwood, Ont. I discovered the old blue one—once a real workhorse by the looks of it but now permanently retired—just sitting there in a ditch near the Kitchener-Waterloo Airport. And I happened upon the derelict Volkswagen Bug sitting pretty alongside a trail on the Bonnieheath Estate Lavender & Winery Farm in Norfolk county.

Can't wait to see what turns up during my driving excursions in 2023! ■

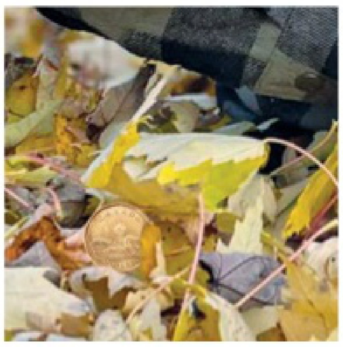
SHARE your Wheels pics and stories online at **ourcanada.ca** or find our address on page 64.

SPOT THE LOONIE

We've hidden a loonie somewhere in this issue. Can you find it? It could be anywhere, but it's not the one below! If you spot the loonie, tell us in which issue and on what page on a postcard, or in a letter, and mail your entry to "Spot the Loonie" Contest, P.O. Box 975, STN Main, Markham, Ont., L3P 0K7. Or join the fun online by visiting https://www.readersdigest.ca/travel/canada/spot-the-loonie/ We'll collect all the entries and have a drawing every other month. The first five correct entries we draw will win $50. Entries will be accepted until July 31, 2023.

For complete rules, write to "Spot the Loonie" Contest, Reader's Digest Contest Administrators Office, PO Box 963, Stn Main, Markham, ON L3P 0J4. This contest is open to all Canadian residents who, at the time of participation, have reached the age of majority according to the law of the province or territory in which they reside. One entry per person, per day is allowed.

COIN IMAGE: ALL CANADA PHOTOS



In the November 2022 issue, we hid the loonie on page 61 within the Our Kids department. We'll publish our latest winning loonie-spotters in an upcoming issue.

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PHOTOS For digital images, set your camera for the best picture quality and send us JPG files. For hard copy photos, send high-quality prints—copies are preferable; we are not responsible for lost photos.

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SOCIAL BUTTERFLY **Ada Grier** of Coquitlam. B.C., writes: “This is our dog Georgie on a winter day. There was fresh snow on the ground as we returned from a trip and both my sons jumped out of our car and, with joyful hoots and howls pelted each other with snowballs. Georgie watched from our garden planting bench as snowflakes landed on his head. His mischievous expression says it all. Our little dog is a papillon, also known as a continental toy spaniel. Georgie is a lively and sociable to the point where our sons laughingly refer to him as a chick magnet! Georgie simply delights in getting attention.” **Have a great shot of your family’s pet? Send it along and it may appear on this page.**

STORYTIME

The Santa Conundrum

Sorting out just who is who and what is what!

by Vi Hughes, *West Vancouver, B.C.*

It was Christmas morning. The house was quiet, the presents unwrapped, the family all tired, on the couch for a nap. All except five-year-old Olivia.

“Wake up!” she said. “I have something to say.”

Mom, Dad and Bella sat up.

“Say about what?” asked Dad.

“Christmas. Santa,” she said.

The family squirmed a bit. They had suspected something was coming. Olivia had been acting strangely for days. It started with her letter to Santa. She said no one could read it. No one! She popped it in the mail and announced, “Now we’ll see who’s who and what’s what.”

Then she spied like a pro: checking closets, looking under beds, listening at the door, checking the mail. Finally, she would tell them who was who and what was what.

“Read this,” she said, pointing to the tag on some wrapping paper. “This tag says ‘From Santa.’ It looks like your printing, Mom.”

“It does look somewhat similar,” said Mom.

“And this wrapping paper,” Olivia said. “It’s ours. How would Santa get our wrapping paper?”

“No idea,” said Dad.

Olivia held up a picture of Santa and waved it in front of the fireplace. “What do you say about this?” she asked.

“I say Santa is very roly-poly,” said 12-year-old Bella.

“That’s all you can say? Roly, poly!” said Olivia. “How could this guy get down a chimney?”

“Not sure,” said Bella.

Olivia crossed her arms, squinted her eyes and scrunched up her nose. She had one last thing to say, to prove who was who and what was what. “I wrote to Santa,” she said. “I asked for just one thing. And I didn’t get it. Know what I think is going on here?”

“What?” said Dad.

But before Olivia could utter even one “think,” *flump!*, something landed on the roof above them. Mom, Dad and Bella sprang off the couch, eyes up, ears on high alert.

“I hear jingling,” said Mom.

“Does sound like jingling,” said Dad.

“Could be bells,” said Bella.

“Who? What?” said Olivia.

Then, *kerplunk!*—a box covered in soot popped out of the fireplace. An envelope was taped to it with words printed on the side. Bella brushed off the soot and read:

Olivia: Oops! Late! North Pole supply problems! Ho Ho Ho!

SC (Sorry)

“Doesn’t look like my printing,” said Mom.

“Is that your Santa letter?” asked Dad.

“Yes, but...,” said Olivia.

“I wonder what’s in the box,” said Bella.

“Who did this?” said Olivia. “What’s going on?”

Mom hugged her gently. “You said you were going to tell us who’s who and what’s what.”

Olivia was in a muddle. She had lost her whos and whats. And the box! What was in the box?

Bella handed it to her. She opened it and peeked in. Smiling up at her was a tiny, furry, stuffed green frog. “It *was* Santa,” she said. “This is what I asked for!” ■

ILLUSTRATION: ISTOCKPHOTO

Send Us Your Best Stories & Photos

HERE ARE SOME OF THE FEATURES AND DEPARTMENTS WE'RE HOPING TO REPLENISH FOR UPCOMING ISSUES

WE NEED YOU!

CAUSE FOR APPLAUSE

Do you or someone you know go above and beyond to help others? This is your chance to share your tales of random acts of kindness, good deeds or worthwhile charitable endeavours. We want to hear about the people or causes you feel are worthy of applause!

WHEELS

Have a passion for vintage cars and motorcycles? Or maybe high-performance vehicles, trucks or jeeps are more your speed. Even oddball junkers are welcome—whatever gets your motor running is of interest to us!

PASTIMES

Are you a **Collector** of unusual things? Maybe you're particularly **Crafty** or have a talent to **Showcase?** Wherever your interests lie—from scrapbooking to hiking, and all points in between—we hope you'll tell us all about them—and send along plenty of eye-popping photos as well.

DESTINATIONS

What exotic places outside of our beautiful country have you travelled to? Whether it's a tale of a previous trip full of fond memories or an upcoming adventure when we are all able to travel again, tell us about your exciting trips abroad and be sure to include lots of colourful pics!

COMING TO CANADA

Whether your family arrived on these shores several generations ago, or you are newly arrived to Canada, we want to hear about the journey that brought you to this country. Share your inspiring tale of arriving and adapting to life in a new land: the hardships and joys alike.

STORYTIME

Whether it's part of their mid-afternoon "quiet time" or their nightly tucking-in ritual, kids just love a good story. Here's an opportunity to share that children's tale you've been meaning to write!

FUNNY STUFF

Do you have a hilarious tale to tell? Our funny bone is just waiting to be tickled! Send along your side-splitting misadventures and knee-slapping anecdotes—everybody loves a good laugh, especially *Our Canada* readers!

OUR TRAVELS

Where in Canada do your travels take you in winter, spring, summer and fall? Do you have a special "go to" spot or do you prefer to roam, seeking out new adventures in new locales? Wherever your travels take you across this great country, we want to hear about it!

If you have an idea you don't see here, send it along as well! *Submit your stories and photos at ourcanada.ca*

TILL NEXT TIME

Kelsy Gibos of Hinton, Alta., writes: “Every winter, the Flying Canoë Volant festival comes to Edmonton. French Canadian, First Nations and Métis cultures are featured in a dazzling display of light. My son, Sullivan, was curious about everything, and the softly falling snow made the whole experience magical.”